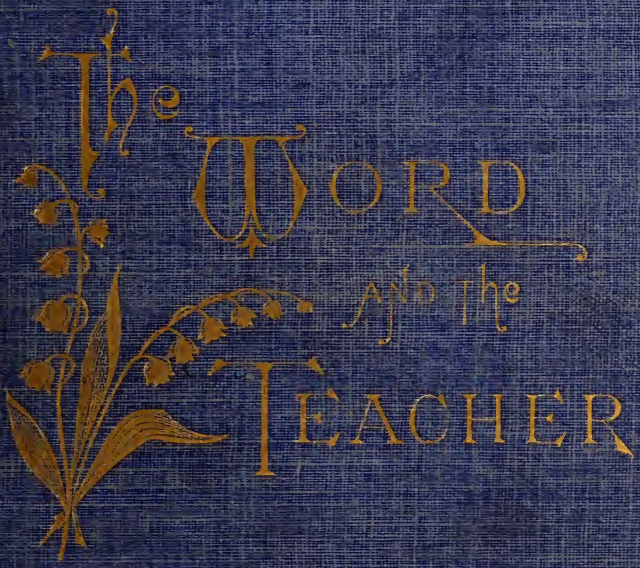
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AND THE
TEACHER

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THE

WORD AND THE TEACHER;

OR,

BIBLE THOUGHTS ABOUT CREATION,

AS SEEN IN GENESIS.

And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. REV. xix. 13.

Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth. JOHN xvi. 13.

By E. H. Pierson.

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AS A WORK OF FAITH.

MAY OUR LORD JESUS GRANT THAT THESE WORDS
OF WEAKNESS BE RAISED IN POWER, IN
THE HEARTS OF THOSE WHO SEEK
THE TRUTH OF GOD.

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INTRODUCTION.

Search the Scriptures. Had ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me. If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words? JOHN v. 39, 46.

The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost; He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

JOHN xiv. 26.

THE WORD AND THE TEACHER.

(Rev. xix. 13. John xvi. 13.)

OR

BIBLE THOUGHTS ABOUT CREATION AS SEEN IN GENESIS.

INTRODUCTION.

IN our Saviour's gentle teaching there are few positive commands; He seeks to win, rather than compel us to enter His kingdom of rest and gladness. Among these few we find: "Search the Scriptures," and, as His is always a "reasonable service," the reason, too, is given, "for they testify of Me." Since His first coming, the world's life has quickened into such a rush of development, both within and without the Church, that even the child of faith may unconsciously be too much absorbed in the wonders of the present,—the Christian manifestations of to-day,—and become a mere gleaner of the experience of others, leaning on and

looking to that rather than the Word itself. The tree of life has burst into such a miracle of bloom, that we are apt to stand gazers at the present fullness, rather than to seek, as we should, to trace out stately branch and stem to that Root far back in the ages, and so learn the source and secret of its strength as to become thoroughly engrafted into its powerful life.

The future also is absorbing. As the time of the second coming draws near, it is the natural attitude for the whole Christian Church to stand with the beloved Apostle of patience, looking eagerly forward beyond the narrow gateways of time, to catch the dazzling beams of glory from that eternal home which our Saviour has prepared for us, where He waits that we, through the faithful use of His gifts, may be "perfected" and "thoroughly furnished for all good works." Even the babe in Christ cannot fail to name these sacred gifts—*the Word of life*, which testifies of Christ, or in other words, the Bible, which is the Christ-book; and *the Spirit*, at once precious heart-gift of our dying Saviour and seal of His triumphant ascension, that Spirit of truth who will guide into all truth the

seeker, and whose special office is to guide those who cherish and cling to, or in Bible phrase, *keep* the Word.

The mighty Being who sends this Guide, speaks to each soul, saying "Search the Scriptures." Shall we not obey and find life? for where Jesus points the way there must be blessing. Let us think deeply, how His earthly life turns to "what is written;" and when "all the prophets have spoken" is finished in the darkness of Calvary's crucifixion, we find our Saviour lingering from His ascension to heavenly glory and power, that His disciples may understand "concerning Himself, all the Scripture, beginning at Moses and the Prophets."

We are warned not to be wise above "what is written," but we are constantly urged to feed on the Word, to "meditate on it day and night," so that we may be wise up to the level of fullness of this heaven-sent revelation. It cannot be without deep meaning that we are thus turned back from the glare of the present, with its whirlwind rush of impetuous life, from the fascination of the future, to this simple, steadfast record of the unchangeable One, who is our Rock, Refuge, and Rest. Can we

search too earnestly this precious heritage with its wealth of covenant promise, this three-fold miracle of the Word of life, which makes manifest through Christ, the "great I Am;" miraculous in its gift on Sinai's mount, miraculous in its preservation, and profoundly miraculous in its wide-spread work in the world to-day. It is indeed, without the aid of the Spirit, the unsearchable riches of Christ, if only from its very fullness.

Prayerfully seeking the presence of this Guide we will not only look at the glimpses of the future as shown in the Apocalypse, and see the King of Kings, whose name is "the Word of God:" we will not only pause in the present Gospel dispensation, speaking with Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, as homeless He walked the streets of Jerusalem, nor linger long with the mystery that surrounds the babe of Bethlehem's manger, where "the Word was made flesh," and the wise men of the East, the intellect of the world, bow in worship: but let the Spirit lead us back to the beginning of Revelation, "before Abraham was," "before the mountains were brought forth," even before time was, and listen reverently to the council of the God-head, as written

out for us by inspiration. Quickened by the Spirit may we so learn, "the Word was God," that we realize in some measure the "strength of Him with whom we have to do," whose "goings forth have been of old, from everlasting," for this strength is pledged to us in everlasting covenant of friendship, by One who has "all power in earth and heaven."

And let our Earth's wild story cease
  Its broken tale of wrong and tears;
Come, Lord of Salem, Prince of Peace,
  And bring again our vanish'd years!

And with Thy guiding help I pierce,
  Life's labyrinth now no longer vain;
The love that frees the universe,
  Hath made its broken story plain.

And art Thou come with us to dwell,
  Our Prince, our Guide, our Love, our Lord?
And is Thy name Emmanuel,
  God present with His world restored?

The heart is glad for Thee! It knows
  None now shall bid it err or mourn;
And o'er its desert breaks the rose
  In triumph o'er the grieving thorn.

Thy reign eternal will not cease;
  Thy years are sure, and glad, and slow;
Within Thy mighty world of peace
  The humblest flower hath leave to blow.

Within Thine eye divine I read
  A love exact, a pity sure,
Minute and tender, taking heed
  Of all that human hearts endure.

That blends within its mighty scope
  Thy vast design, our feeble plan,
And brings again each faded hope
  In giving back his God to man.

Carmina Crucis, by DORA GREENWELL.

DAY FIRST, OR AGE (ÆON) ONE.

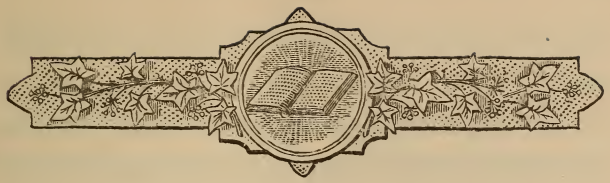
GEN. i. 1-5.

"IN THE BEGINNING;"

OR,

Christ the Word.

"God divided the light from the darkness."



CHRIST THE WORD.

COMING to this earliest record of inspired revelation, we are taken at once into the very heart of nature; having as a clue one of the first verses of the apostolic teachings, (Rom. i. 21,) we find that the whole visible world is prepared for us, that we may learn of the invisible and eternal —a sort of object-teaching from God to His children, that they may come home to Him and be saved from self and self's limited ways. (Matt. vi. 24–34.)

Looked at in the true light, the whole of nature, the changing seasons, even the starry hosts of heaven, are unrolled before us simply as a magnificent illuminated manuscript, urging us to this mighty salvation; eloquent with the message, "I will not call you servants, but friends, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth:" urg-

ing us to deeper communion with the "mind of God."

Carefully comparing Scripture with Scripture, we find the myriad thoughts of beauty presented in the thirty-four verses which should form the first chapter, centre round and resolve themselves into a seven-fold picture of "Christ our life," and a vivid illustration of the imperative command first spoken of: "Search the Scriptures,—they testify of Me."

In the Beginning. (Heb. i. 8–10.)

In seeking to render some great symphony, the musician ponders over the first phrases, which make known to him the key-note and motive power of the whole; so, in entering on the glorious harmonies of creation, we should dwell attentively on the opening sentences, and pausing, before time was, with the beginning of the creations of God, find ourselves face to face with Christ, who is the beginning, (Col. i. 18,) before all things, and by whom all things consist.

In the beginning! that first foot-hold, rising above the mighty floods of timeless eternity, that affords resting-place for man, the child of time

This phrase was used by the early fathers as one of the names of Christ, and looking at its Bible associations, it assumes this personal character. In this sense the sentence: "In the beginning God created," seems equivalent to or parallel with the passage in Heb. ch. i., 2d and 3d verses: "God has spoken to us by His Son, by whom He made the worlds, or ages, who is the brightness of His glory, and on the right hand of the majesty on high, upholds all things by the word of His power," that is, by His powerful word. If seeking, with St. John, to be in the Spirit, we may hear the voice of one made in the likeness of the Son of Man, saying: "I am the Beginning—and the End," bearing witness to the truth of the inspired Apostle, who said of the Christ, that it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.

And again: "I am Alpha and Omega." It is by these seemingly insignificant things, the letters of the alphabet, that all the world's wisdom must be summed up, recorded, or made manifest. All earth's intellectual monarchs must submit to their sway. Every idea, every thought of man, bears their impress. In fact, all communication of man

with man, practically centres in these; so that the first and last of these may be said (as including all the others) to span the utmost limit of the world's wisdom. The Greek alphabet formed the basis of the language of the scholars and philosophers of the Christian era, bringing to us, apart from the New Testament, some of the grandest monuments of human intellect ever possessed by man. So is Christ, the crucified, made to us the wisdom and power of God; for in Him dwelleth the fullness of the God-head bodily, including all human wisdom, and passing far beyond our natural understanding.

The Divine Wisdom or Memra. (Rev. v. 1–3.)

Among the Hebrew scholars, the sacred wisdom, —Memra, or Word,—(equivalent to the Greek Logos,) was one of the names of the Messiah, whose divine power is poetically described in Prov. viii.: "Doth not wisdom call?" etc. And again in Prov. iii.: "Happy is the man who findeth wisdom," etc.

So spake the wise among the Hebrews of the Divine Wisdom, or Word; the, to them shadowy, mysterious Memra, whom they knew, as it were,

afar off, but in whom they trusted with their whole heart, and eagerly gleaned all that was written of Him in the law and the prophets.

We are apt to think of those early Hebrews as specially favored, and though, on one hand, we cannot but admire their beautiful loyalty to *The Word,* and its splendid results, we wonder, as at some strange thing, when we find self-will and other forms of selfism prevailing and rendering them so indifferent or actually opposed to the truth, that even their inspired prophets often die a martyr's death. Yet now, when so much of that future which their dark sayings shadowed forth, when these mysteries of old are written out for us in letters of light, so that a child may read; now, when the Word made flesh seeks out each heart and mind with its message of life, and love, and gladness, how many are there among us who heartily "believe the report," so that it becomes a present life-power and guide in affairs of daily life?

Let us hear our Saviour, speaking to those who took away the key of knowledge, yet entered not in themselves. "Thus saith *the Wisdom* of God, (Luke xi. 49., Matt. xxiii. 34,) I will send prophets

and apostles, some of whom they will slay, and their blood, shed from the foundation of the world, will be required of this generation." This key of knowledge was the God-given Word. The generation addressed was one, the example of whose lives made the Word of little consequence, and whose teachings tended to belittle its power. The age was one of lukewarmness, an atmosphere in which selfish aims and ambitions flourished as rank weeds, and stretched out their crude pride even to the things of Heaven, obscuring, as far as possible, the clear shining of the presence and its quickening powers. (Rev. iii. 15, 16.)

May we of this age and generation, heed the warning given in mercy by the wisdom of God, and beware of this indifference to the Word, and lukewarmness, which is the sin that killed the prophets, and the Chief of these prophets, the Christ, who is to us the Wisdom of God, and beginning and end of prophecy.

Heaven and Earth. (Verse 1.)

From the Beginning, Heaven and Earth blend in one, in the thought of God; through the Bible

we find them constantly associated, from the hour of creation's dawn, "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," until now, when the innumerable host around the throne of glory watch with eager interest the race that is set before us on earth, waiting, that we may come home, (Heb. xii. 1,) and helping us, as keepers of the word. (Rev. xii. 9.)

Throughout the Bible runs the appeal, "Give ear, oh ye heavens, and hear, oh earth, the words of my mouth!" Heaven and earth, the invisible and visible, form one life, and what God hath joined, let no man seek to put asunder; yet how far do many succeed in putting heaven, and the power of things invisible, out of their daily lives. Yet from creation, the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead. (Rom. i. 41.) The lavish beauty of creation is then to keep in constant remembrance the power of the Word—this same Word by which the heaven and earth were framed, (2 Peter, iii.,) and which speaks to us in blessing.

Each life is a new creation, twin-born, of visible

and invisible body and soul, which, quickened by the Spirit, may be even more eloquent than nature, of the power of the Word. Fed by the Word, led by the Spirit, the invisible life we lead may so breathe the sweet, pure air of heaven, that every day will bear witness of the practical power of the invisible presence with us always, even unto the end. Every day may shadow forth the truth of Him who said, in the beginning of our era of glad tidings, that the kingdom of heaven is at hand! and our lives so translate the message to those around, that they cannot but see that our cares are with God, and His rest with us, and "that His rest is glorious!"

This rest of God, with its resurrection power, seeks us out, to enter in and possess our earthly lives. Through the Word, and the Teacher or Guide, it is in reach of all. May we so receive it that we walk as seeing Him who is invisible, having our conversation in heaven. Conversation here stands for all manner of communication, being the chief avenue of intercourse of soul with soul; and indeed our words give the true tone and temper of our lives. We need hardly say that the meaning

here is not that the conversation should be always of things unseen, or heavenly mysteries; but as heaven means simply *raised up*, so the tenor of life and speech should show, that we are really placed on a Rock higher than our natural level; that gives such firm footing, and such far-reaching, clear views, that we are emancipated from care and self-seeking, and the dull earthly facts of life bloom with possibilities, and the chances and changes, so called, of every day, serve only to bring near the royal, healing touch of the Word.

There are no little things with God. Each wayside flower blooms to remind us that in the beginning was the Word with creative life-power. So with each soul that seeks this newness of life; in the Word is the beginning found, and through the invisible Spirit is the power established in us.

The law that creates and governs the bloom of the flower, creates the bloom or resurrection life in the soul. With Him with whom we have to do, there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. The law that moves the drop of water, moves the world, and the same law "governs the fall of the tear."

The Word which formed heaven and earth, created and upholds the ages, which, as they roll on, serve to record or embody the world's invisible thought and visible act, forming the great life-tide of the human race, which from the beginning has been pressing forward to the goal of the Invisible and Eternal.

In the beginning the powers of heaven are revealed as bending in blessing over earth, with its myriad life. It is *in the Word alone* that man has had a clear revelation of the invisible world and its powers. Christ as king of heaven and earth, stands revealed as the way of access to these subtle mysteries of the invisible world. The nearer we are to Him, the nearer to those who have gone before—the spirits of just men made perfect.

He it is who hath led captivity captive, and has "broken down every partition wall," so that light enters even into the shadow of death. In Him and through Him the visible church militant becomes the invisible church triumphant, and Heaven with its resurrection life and power, enters earth.

The first two verses form a sort of preface to the seven-fold days—Æons or Ages of Creation—in

which are stated a few of the foundation facts on which the Cosmos of earth and heaven is builded; and we have seen the chief foundation fact is the Word. The corner-stone is Christ.

The Word meets us on this battle-field of life, and Christ is made manifest, wielding all power in heaven and earth; almighty over things seen and unseen, — not only leader of the angelic host, but ruler and conqueror of the principalities of darkness, the mysterious powers of the air, whose name is legion, and whose aim is destruction.

The Bible comes to us in the midst of a fierce contest, for we are born surrounded by these enemies. As in any contest, it is deadly danger to underrate the strength or zeal of the enemy, or to be ignorant of its power, so the Bible, (although containing only, as it were, the marching order of the Church-militant, and therefore entering not much into the origin of things,) points vividly to these otherwise unknown adversaries. It bravely faces these facts of darkness which hedge in the life of humanity, that, realizing our helplessness, we may press into thorough allegiance to the King and Leader who opens a way through these depths

of darkness, and thus becomes the way of a mighty salvation.

The closer we cling to the Word, the nearer we are to Christ, and the nearer to the way of angel ministry. The prayer of faith will bring "presently more than ten legions of angels." The Bible plainly teaches that those for us are more than those against us. While it forcibly declares the fact of the existence of these mysterious beings who crowd and threaten our life, it would sometimes seem at every step, yet it also tells us that with every temptation a way of escape is prepared to foil the subtle tempter's power. However powerful the prince of this world and its darkness, we can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth us, *if we* SEEK *that strength.* For the word from our Leader is, "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

In our Saviour's life on earth, acts of royal authority were rare; we find them chiefly exercised over those persistent, baffling powers, who vanish only at His word, crying, "What have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth, thou Holy One of

God?" And again over the angry waves of Galilee comes the same word, saying "Peace." Mighty as the tempest-tossed sea is the invisible conflict of life and the powers of darkness and death, and this tempest is round us! Striking at the very roots of life, these facts of darkness remain; no explanation can do away with them, or can be given beyond the glimpses revealed through the Word, reminding us that:

"The awful conflict that was waged, by Christ the Prince of Peace,
Against the powers of darkness, while time lasts will never cease;
His body, the Church-militant, must follow where He led,
To prove her mystic union with her victorious Head."

Our Saviour's life as our example, begins with temptations from these evil powers. He conquers with the sword of the Spirit; before what God has written, tempter and temptation vanish, and the angels come and minister.

The Word breathes the spirit of the battle-field. The command is: "Be courageous; the book of the law, let it not depart from thee night and day.

So shalt thou prosper, so shalt thou have good success."

The presence and weapon of the Conqueror are with the child of faith, as his sure hope and only ground of confidence. Past, present and future echo the same watch-word from our unchangeable Lord: "Fear not; I am with thee alway, even to the end of the world."

To the friend of God, that is, to the one who takes Him at His word, is said: "Fear not; I am thy shield and exceeding great reward." The Prophets bring the same message to the fear-stricken people of God: "Fear not; be not dismayed; I am with thee, I am thy God. I will help thee, saith Jehovah, thy Redeemer." "Fear not, I have redeemed thee; when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and in the fire the flame shall not kindle upon thee."

When weary and confused with our human needs, may the Spirit lead us to feel the quickening touch of more than human tenderness fall on our life, and to hear the voice of the Son of Man, saying, "Fear not. I am the Beginning and the ending, the first and the last, [that is to say, all

things are included in My power, and all possible chances and changes in My control.] I have the keys of Death and Hades. Fear not."

These watch-words are some of the "treasures of darkness," prepared for the faithful combatants in this "Fight of Faith," and form the songs in the night of the Church-militant. This fierce contest is foreshadowed by the visible chaos and darkness before the Word enters bringing light. We would learn from these visible things of creation of the invisible, not only of the soul and its antagonists, but the power of the Word and the Spirit in and over both. Let us look at some of these, and the crowd of mysteries which surround them, in the picture which science holds up to-day to its attentive world, elaborated but recently from the lavish materials under its hand, aided, within a few months, by the magic touch of spectrum analysis.

In the beginning of visible matter before time was, we behold a huge, glowing gas-flame, parted from some central mass of gases or nebulous material, struggling in the intense cold of the attenuated matter which fills space. Its own heat and this outer cold produce a contest of forces, tending

at once to contract its mass and fix its form. The fluctuating flame-like body becomes enclosed in dark walls, formed by this strife of elements, and its own rapid movement. These press down and around with such force, that our present earthly world becomes a fixed fact—its enclosing walls permanent, imprisoning through all time the central heart of fire which pulses in the bosom of mother earth. This seething sea of waters gathers fathomless depths, and sends many an inroad through the first frail walls, while the subtle mists ascend, floating afar as battle flags above the intense tumult, and as this subsides, settling down on the lifeless face of this mighty deep, in thick, cloud-like masses, filled with a deathly chill from the awful, pathless space without; and the earth becomes clothed with thick darkness, (Job, xxxviii. 9,) and fettered with chains forged from these mists of darkness, seeming to make it a final hopeless prison-house, where night, filled with shadows of death, is destined to abide forever.

From these recent teachings of science let us glance at the record of inspiration written out for us centuries before Christ came. In the first

verse the Hebrew word translated 'created,' would suggest the previous existence and unknown origin of the material, from which in thick darkness, our visible solar system and this earth have been fashioned in glory and beauty. The word is from the Arabic root, meaning at first, simply to plane off or carve into form; so its use here would indicate the gradual reduction in size, and moulding into its present form, as we are told God created man, forming him from the dust of the ground.

The second verse describes the three-fold phases, which this primeval flame or nebulous matter assumes, under tremendous pressure. That matter has three forms is obvious, being gaseous, liquid and solid, but that almost any material can assume these three forms, was but lately proved, or even imagined. The most impalpable gases become solid under certain conditions of cold and pressure. Sometimes the weight of three thousand atmospheres and –220° of cold, have been used to effect this result; on the other hand, to use a slight and somewhat superficial example, the tenacious metal zinc, under the effect of heat, loses its dull color,

becomes a glowing liquid, and finally, a superbly colored purple vapor or gas.

"*The Earth was without Form and Void.*"

This is to say, formless and empty. We see here, the fluctuating flame writhing in the stern grasp of the outer cold, void or empty as the clear gas-flame, showing us that He did not create it in confusion. The chaos of the Greek writers and its attendant anarchy, came at a later era. This storm and strife period, with its depths of darkness, indicated the mighty forces involved, reminding us of the day of Jehovah's controversy, when He will stretch out the line of confusion, on the world's rebellious people. This war of the elements has its place in tradition, as the mighty struggle of the old-time Titans; and both are shadows of that dread hour when even the peace and glory of heaven were clouded, and there was war in heaven! Satan and his angels contended with the hosts of God. These evil powers are banished to the realms of earth, haunting its life, and seeking to rule and possess it. But the kingdom and rule of God, and the power of His Christ triumph, and from the darkness light is born!

The first chapter in the Bible might serve as contents-table, or a summary of the latest results of the researches of science in those phases of the natural world, which it describes. The story of the ages has been slowly spelled out from its rock-bound record. These "stones of emptiness," rising from early chaos, echo the message of the Prophets, "Blessed be the king who cometh in the name Jehovah. Peace in heaven and on earth." These silent rocks* so long the deaf and dumb witnesses of the Creator's power, are now eloquent illustrations of fulfilled scientific prophecy —twin sister to historic prophecy evidence. This brilliant phase of truth is the special heritage of our time, and one of which the children of faith are just getting firm grasp. It has long been lying latent in the mental darkness which shrouded the world as a death-robe, specially since the time of the mediæval monks, whose notions, oddly enough, pass current as holy writ. We will let those who like, combat for or against their limited statements and superstitions as Bible truth, as Don Quixote fought the wind-mill: but the wind-mills of skep-

* Luke xiv. 40.

ticism, or of bigotry, have always done effective, though unconscious service to God's truth, serving to grind away the chaff and husks which form the bushel-measure with which skeptic or bigot alike seek (for the extremes always meet) to cover over or extinguish the light of the Word.

We will not dwell on mere scientific evidence, fascinating as it is, except to illustrate the fact, that there is no sort of truth or earthly wisdom that touches the home of man, or his mind or heart, that has not some clue given in, or shines brighter for contact with this Word of Life. The believer needs not this glittering evidence—dear as it may be to his heart—for the foundation stone of his faith; and its power is, "Thy Word is truth." "Heaven and earth may pass away, but My Word abideth forever." *

"*The Spirit of God moved.*"

Jehovah reigns; clouds and darkness are about Him; darkness and light to Him are both alike: into the realms of darkness without order, where the light is as darkness, descends the Holy Spirit. Over the still face of this sea of death comes a

* Matt. xxiv. 35; Is. xl. 8; Jas. i. 25.

pentecostal baptism, opening the way of earth's redemption from eternal night.

The Spirit of God moved, unresting, until the pathway of light is prepared,—organizing even chaos into harmonized development.

The word here translated "moved," signifies, also, hovering or brooding,—as a bird over its nest and young. It is used in this sense in Deuteronomy, xxxiii. 11. God, in His power, makes this mighty deep of darkness, which encircled the earth, a mere swathing band of the fullness of life that is to be,—for "He formed it to be inhabited."—Is. xlv. 18.

Life enters this world cradled in the shadow of Death,—"hedged in with darkness," its feeble vital flame cherished into fullness of being by the Guide and Comforter,—who searcheth the darkness,—seeking each soul, to lead it home to the heart of God by the way of the Word and its light; from the beginning, this brooding presence of God cherishing and fashioning. Let us look well at the divine love manifest in the facts of creation's dawn, that we may, with the inspired Psalmist, seek in this shadow of the almighty

wing to be sheltered from the thick darkness that encompasses our life with the terror and evil that walk at home in it.

"*God said, Let there be Light.*"

God speaking in human speech! Fore-shadowing of the Word made flesh. Striking prophecy of the incarnation of the One, whose coming was ordained from the foundation of the world.

Primeval silence is broken! The Word enters, and the cloud-chains, forged of darkness, are sundered as the Day-spring from on high visits the earth, bringing light. So is it that, from the beginning, the entrance of Thy Word giveth light, and the light was the life of man. This light came as the sun shining in its strength, pressing through the gates of the shadow of death. The power of tempest, which reigned in the depths of the world-wide waters, is subdued. The Most High utters His voice, and the foundations of the world appear. The same Word which stilled this primeval ocean, spake to the angry waves of Galilee;—even the voice of Jesus; mighty to save; who is the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever. Through all time

it has spoken to the life of humanity,—stilling its fierce life-tide into the peace which passeth understanding, while the Spirit of God, brooding over, guides its course to the appointed end.

The power that sways this life-tide in the affairs of men, must sway each soul. The Spirit and the Word are around us, and are ours, for blessing or for judgment, as we choose. Every day, with its cares and perplexities, brings the message, Choose now, whether we will rest in the presence of the Word, and the Guide or Teacher, or wander on with vague allegiance to an unknown God,—passing on through a chaos of confusion until our feet stumble on the dark mountains. But the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. To comprehend, is to include fully,—to have power over. All that the darkness had touched, it had fettered to its will or power. But the Word came with Light,—leading captivity captive. And now, above the rush of life,—loud as many waters,—sounds the song of the Church, militant and triumphant,—"All worthy Thou, who hast redeemed us, to receive honor, glory, power and blessing."

"*God saw that it was Good.*"

When God has blessed, who shall reverse it? In the beginning, the benediction or blessing of God rests upon the Word and the light which it brings. As the sunshine comes to the earth, filling it with splendor and gladness, and renewing its life day by day, so the Word comes forth from the fountain of life and light, and entering the natural darkness and apathy of the mind of man, brings enlightenment and progress, and entering the heart, brings gladness and freedom. Engrafted into the daily life, it quickens as the sunshine, making us indeed and in truth, partakers of the "riches of Christ." "So the blessing of the Lord maketh rich, He addeth no sorrow with it." This blessing *must* follow the presence of the Word, and like its unchangeable Giver, be perpetual, irrevocable, abiding forever.

"*God divided the Light from the Darkness.*"

Another step in creation! What God has divided, no power can unite. The darkness is cut off, its days numbered. The Word enters that "horror of thick darkness," and "sharper than any

two-edged sword," divides the way of light from the darkness forever. So, also, has it fallen on the invisible powers of darkness and tempest, with all their myriad brood of sin, evil and sorrow, and the power of God stands between each soul touched by the Word, (for where it is received light *must* enter,) and these dread enemies, represented by the darkness with its death-chill and confusion. Manifestly there can be no divided service to these opposing powers. Again the message comes: Choose now, whom ye will serve. Chief lesson, perhaps, of the picture presented, is the misery and struggle of such service, with its worse than Egyptian bondage, merging in gross darkness, while in the beginning, the way of light separates rapidly and decidedly, unto the Gospel of Christ or "Gladness in Jesus."

Children of the day and its gladness, quickened with its power, we must become; or remain children of the night. We must belong to one or the other. God recognizes no divided service. God called the light day—the darkness He called night. As another step in the progress of creation, these things are named according to their nature, and held

up to us in visible form, or "time patterns" of things eternal and supernatural, in which we see as in a glass, the power and love of God. The splendors of eternal light are subdued to quicken and comfort earthly life, and enter into closest communion with our daily life. The far-reaching "Light that never was on land or sea," comes to serve us in our daily toil, preparing the mind of man to receive, in the fullness of time, this fact, that "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Meanwhile, until that light enters our souls, we are dwellers of the night, and as to our life, within are fightings, and without are fears.

The word day is used in at least three meanings in this chapter, and such, also, is its use in our every-day speech; a period of light of about twelve hours, a period of day and night, and a general era, as Luther's day, &c. (Gen. ii. 4.)

The Hebrew word Yom, is the equivalent of the Greek word Æon, as used in the Bible, and sometimes translated either worlds or ages. (Heb. i. 2, margin.) The word involves the idea of a grad-

ual growth to perfection, assisted by outside agencies, as the egg, when brooded over, comes finally from its shell-imprisonment to full life, or the life of the seed is drawn from its dark prison-house, by the subtle agencies of water and heat, to final bloom and fruitage. So these successive ages, upheld by the Word and Spirit, become developed, and are types to us of the power of the creative Word, which cannot remain or return void and inactive.

In the original this is *age*, or *day one*, not first; to distinguish, perhaps, from the others, numbered second, &c. For this stretches far away into the mysteries of eternity, seeming to form a vague shadow of the Infinite One, who draws near to commune with man. The succeeding Æons picture Christ in some special relationship of His manifold ministry to us, while in the beginning this 'Æon one,' stands distinct from all others, as it shadows forth the One begotten in the bosom of the Father, before time was, making manifest the glory of the God-head. As wonderful beauty and varied colors deck the day-dawn, so around the dawn of creation linger traces of unspeakable glory, some glimpse of which is given us in this day one,

whose beginning is lost in eternity, and which is yet the beginning of visible life — the first-born of the creations of God.

All the life it foreshadowed, all the glory and love it reveals, centre in the Word. Far back as revelation casts its light we find that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made. In the fullness of time the Word was made flesh, and dwelt upon earth.

Into the dim future men gaze eagerly: once only have the clouds veiling it been swept aside, and the power of Christ made manifest. With the beloved disciple we behold heaven opened, and the "Faithful and True," whose name is called "THE WORD OF GOD," while the armies of heaven follow Him. Out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, and on His vesture a name is written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light
which no man can approach unto, to whom
be honor and power everlasting.

AMEN.

DAY OR AGE (ÆON) SECOND.

GEN. i. 6-8.

THE FIRMAMENT;

OR,

Christ the Way.

The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead. ROM. i. 20.

CHRIST THE WAY.

BY the Jew, no office was held more sacred than the prophet's,—not even that of High Priest. The prediction of the future, with which alone we are apt to associate it, formed but a small part of his service. At once teacher of priest, king, and people, he stood revered by all, as an interpreter of "the mind of the Spirit," making known the will of God.

His precious words were recorded with extreme care, and given to king and priest to guard with their lives if need be, for those who would come after, being for all time, the "gift of God" to His people, that they might "be perfected, and thoroughly furnished for all good works." What God has given by inspiration, and guarded for us by miracles of power, His Spirit alone can fully interpret to each soul; hence we are told, that "no

prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation; but holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." So, in order to enter into the full meaning of "what is written," we need the presence of this Spirit of Truth as Guide and Teacher. —John xvi. 13.

In the more obvious matters of the Word, "God does not leave Himself without a witness." The many witnesses who make up this one Book of Truth so harmonize, that a little careful attention in comparing Bible texts will perfect many an apparently vague saying into fullness of power, doing away with many a so-called contradiction, as well as a good deal of mystery. In other words, the Bible is its own best commentary. But after "all diligence is used," without the presence prayerfully sought, the Word will often seem but a dead letter, or effete law, rather than the way of newness of life; as containing commands impossible to be obeyed,—such as, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect;" or pictures of joy unrealized, and as to its promises a romance of impossible things.

This may seem strange language; but is it not

what our standard of faith too frequently makes of the Word and its promises. We are told that "*all* Scripture is a gift of God, and is profitable." So if it seems dull or unmeaning, it is to remind us that "we are of ourselves insufficient to help ourselves; that sufficiency (or satisfying,) must be of God."—2 Cor. iii. 5. In other words, that the fullness of the Word does not, or cannot, readily come into our minds. We are in *absolute need* of the heaven-sent Spirit,—the promised Guide and Teacher, who comes specially to open our understanding concerning the Word,— and to keep in remembrance all that Christ said,—as well as the prophecies concerning Him.

It is not for any special worthiness, but for our soul's need that the promises are given. So it cannot be humility, but languid faith, which keeps this blessing out of our daily life. God, who spared not His only Son, will He not with Him freely give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?—Luke xi. 13: "Ask, and receive, that your joy may be full." And here we catch a glimpse of the way to the fullness of joy and power, which characterized the early Church, in spite of its outward

pain and weakness. This joy and peace are fruits of the Spirit, promised through time and eternity to the disciples of Jesus! Let us seek to compare Scripture with Scripture, until the various shadings of remote times and speech, blend in the present perfect light of God's full truth. If, in seeking, we are baffled,—if no revelation seems to await us, —it is to teach us that our "thoughts are not as God's thoughts;" and lead us to seek the promised presence of the Spirit humbly, and even *more earnestly, if possible*, than we seek truth from the Word.

If we thus take the rough places of the Word to the God who loves to bless, in the earnestness that prompted the Prince who wrestled with God and prevailed, (Gen. xxxii. 28,) and from whom the Church of God was named from that hour, we shall soon find it so engrafted by the Spirit of life into our souls, that the desert places must rejoice and bloom, "for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Received in this way, the good graft will so possess our life and soul with its mighty salvation, or healing, that the fruits of the Spirit must abound with more than tropic luxuriance.

It is not a vain service that our Saviour commands, and the prophets both command and entreat,—"Seek ye out of the Book of the Lord and read, no one of these shall fail, for my mouth hath commanded, and *His Spirit hath gathered them*,—the wilderness shall rejoice for them."—Is. xxxiv. 16.

There are some who gather diligently, but little life seems to come of it. The sacrifice of obedience seems made ready; the dry wood, as it were, laid in order for the burning; but it lacks the fire from Heaven. They seem to be in the position of certain of the early disciples, to whom Paul came, saying, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost?" The answer was, "We have not so much as heard if there be any Holy Ghost."—Acts xix. 2. But *they* had only knowledge of John's Baptism; while we have not only the Gospel, or glad tidings of Christ as recorded through the four Evangelists, but what may with all reverence be termed the *Gospel* of the Holy Ghost, or the Book of Acts,—the glad tidings of the Comforter and Teacher, coming from our ascended Lord to fill each life with His resurrection power;

chief of whose wondrous gifts and offices on earth (1 Cor. xii. 3) seems to be the opening our minds concerning what is written; or in other words, teaching us to "see Jesus," our Saviour, not here, but risen, Lord of all power in heaven and on earth,—and to fill us with that power, and fit us for abiding communion with it.

The Firmament.

"God said, Let there be a firmament," and thus, "By the word of God were the heavens made."—2 Peter iii. 5; Heb. xi. 3. In the first age, the Word comes; the storm-girt world is touched by the conqueror, light, and the force of the tempest subdued forever. Again the Word comes, and the power of the Godhead is again made manifest, cleaving into the very heart of the waters, as "Jehovah maketh a way in the whirlwind," and "the depths of the sea."—Is. li. 10; Neh. i. 3; Ex. xiv. 16. An ocean of air is spread around the earth; and life, with its glory and beauty, becomes a possibility. In this "clear shining" "body of Heaven," (Ex. xxiv. 10,) is "the way where light dwelleth," or where light abides enthroned.

Such, then, was God's way of redemption for our earth from the curse of desolation. From the moment this fountain of life reaches it, or this breath from Heaven draws near, it ceases to be a mere prison-house of death and the hosts of destruction. But "captivity is led captive," and the blind prisoner, Earth, sees!

So in the fullness of time came Christ to earth; and so now is His coming to each soul, who will receive the "glorious liberty" He brings to its daily life, fettered as it is with sin, and care, and vagueness.

The word firmament, means simply expansion, or expanse; while the special use here, is defined in verse 20, as the place where the birds fly; or the invisible, etherial ocean, which surrounds our earth to the depth of many miles; forming emphatically the "one way of life for all creatures upon it." In it "we live and move and have our being." An obvious type of Him, in whom our soul's life must centre.

"Thus saith Jehovah, I will give them one heart. One way I will rejoice over them, to do them good."—Jer. xxxii. 39. For centuries came

priest and prophet to prepare "The way of the Lord."—Math. xi. 10; Luke i. 76. "For a highway shall be there, and a way; the unclean shall not pass over it; but the redeemed shall walk there."—Is. iii. 9. Christ coming as the Emmanuel,—God with us,—takes up this word of the prophets, saying, "I am the way and the life."

The Way of At-One-Ment.

The clouds which pressed close upon the surface of the earth with the chill of death, shutting it in, isolated with its own fierce unrest, are now raised up, and all things are made plain or manifest, through this firmament, which at once shelters and reveals, so that our way on earth is made one of freedom and gladness, and the remote things of heaven are brought near.

It is, in fact, an incarnation of invisible, unimagined power,—"always" present in our daily lives everywhere, "even to the end of the world." An abiding way of life,—heaven-sent,—yet it is fashioned of earthly materials; it becomes the one way of At-one-ment, union, or access of things visible and invisible,—the way of communion of

the powers of Earth and Heaven. In the word expansion,—which would probably be the more exact rendering for firmament,—is suggested one of the most marked attributes of this ether of life; its elasticity, which enables it to enter into all places, and adapt itself to all variations.

As the dark storm-clouds were severed from earth, this gentle touch came, making manifest a "way of peace;" a new element in life, more powerful than the strength of those primeval tempests, which were the earth's natural birth-right. Even so does the touch of the "Prince of Peace" fall on those who, "laboring and heavy laden," seek His rest. For He is our peace, (Eph. xi. 14, 18,) coming to "them that were far off, as to them that were nigh." Even as the life-full air of Heaven presses in through every partition wall, so came Jesus of Nazareth, our soul's friend, and the sinner's friend, to seek and save the lost. Through Him we have access by a "new and living way" unto the Father; and in communion with Him fades away every alienation.

As "He talks with us in the way," every petty dividing line, each little shibboleth of creed,

passes away; and no longer the discussion is whether they who think with Paul or Cephas shall be greatest, but "Christ is all in all." *

May we not pray with the Psalmist, "Teach me Thy way, O Lord;" for, quickened in its newness of life,† all ordinary living seems but a death-sleep, or "way of darkness."

Time would fail if we should try to dwell on all the life-full offices of air, as it unites in one great communion of life and well-being the unnumbered creations of God.

With all said, it would only be a faint echo of the wonderful adaptation of Christ's mighty salvation to the untold needs of humanity; a glimpse only of the unsearchable riches of Christ, making known the fellowship or communion of the mystery hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. ‡

The very word echo recalls the fact that every word uttered has in the air its only way of access to its aim. So, throughout the world's life, is it, where the blending atmosphere of the love of

* Col. iii. 11. † Ps. cxix. 37. ‡ Eph. iii. 8, 9.

Christ and His Word does not enter, that nations, parties, and even kinsmen, are as much aliens, and as strange to one another, as if on separate planets.

Let us not linger in this world's life, with its silence of death creeping in, but press to the prize of our high calling in Christ, and be so separated unto the kingdom of heaven, that all these things may be given through the "Holy Spirit of Promise,"* as we rest in its sweet atmosphere of faith, which, growing clearer and purer, reveals day by day unimagined glories.†

The Way of Redemption, or Christ the Sin-Bearer.

The cloud-masses, huge as lakes or the smaller seas, are raised as readily by the buoyant air as the rain-drops, and float afar off decked with light and beauty, — servants of God, messengers of His love, — laden with water of life, though drawn perhaps from the turbid salt seas, cleansed and purified by the touch of the air, through and by which they were raised to the height of heaven.

* Rom. v. 2, 5. † 1 Cor. xi. 7, 9, 10.

So into the life of man, hedged in with self, heavy laden with sin and care, so that light and hope are gone, the Word enters with its voice from heaven, speaking of the way of redemption, or the *abiding Presence* which redeems; and in our wilderness life is heard the voice of the Man of sorrows, saying, "My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth," for this peace saves now with a mighty salvation that abideth forever. "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so is His mercy toward them that fear Him."* Far as the East is from the West, so are our sins and cares borne from us as readily as the cloud-masses were floated away from sight; and standing fast in this glorious liberty, we can say, "Surely He hath borne our griefs; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him." But this new and living way is the way everlasting; it endures beyond the narrow gateway of death, and passes beyond the furthest limit of human thought; yet we may enter it with confidence, for thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, "Beside Me there is no Saviour; I have blotted

* Ps. ciii. 11, 12.

out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins. I am the Lord who maketh all things, that stretched out the heavens; I have redeemed thee."

All the mysteries of life and death fade away as this light of eternity presses in, and earthly light or darkness are alike dim before the clear shining atmosphere of faith, and the abiding Presence it reveals.

It is through this firmament that we have whatever revelation we possess of the wonderful "beyond," with its hosts of "heaven" ranged in mystic order in the depths of space.

God hath said, Do not I fill heaven and earth? Behold, heaven is My throne. Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off? Then "whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, or whither flee from Thy presence? If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning, even there shall Thy hand lead me. I will praise Thee." Oh, lead me in the way everlasting. The Lord of heaven and earth giveth all things life, that they should seek after Him; for "He is not far from

any one of us. In Him we live, and move, and have our being."

In the vision of Ezekiel we see the likeness of the firmament as a terrible crystal;* that is, "clear shining." Sapphire-hued,† crystalline, so far reaching and magnificent as to inspire awe, striking out beyond the flight of angels, even to the throne, recalling the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

As the vision grows plainer, upon the throne is seen "the likeness of a man, and this was the vision of the glory of God, and I saw. I fell on my face, and heard the voice of One who spake." The prophet is not alone in this vision; for God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, and in these last days hath spoken to us by His Son, who is the brightness of His glory.

So, whether it is in the least of daily wants, or the remotest aspiration for heavenly things, we are

* Ezek. i. 22. † Ezek. x. i.

still brought face to face with the Christ, upholding all things by His powerful word, and the longer we gaze the more this kingdom of heaven presses into our lives. Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. With Thee is the fountain of life; in Thy light shall we see light.

It is through the firmament, or body of air, that we see the sun enthroned in rainbow-tinted clouds as each morning comes, after the death of sleep has visited us, bringing resurrection life and power, and we seem to see, with the inspired prophet, "the God of glory, who came by the way of the East."* It recalls the hour of the second coming, when, as the lightning shineth from East to West, shall the "Son of Man come in the clouds of heaven, with great glory, and gather His elect from the four winds of heaven."

And a Highway shall be There.

The air of heaven enters everywhere, filled with purity and freshness. As the sea is moved with

* Ezek. xliii. 2.

its tides, so the air is swayed by far-off influences, neither earth-bound nor earth-given. Space and time are defied in the speed which conveys the subtle impulses. Bird and plant, with their unperverted sensibilities, feel the electric thrill, and become, to the clear-sighted observer, sure harbingers of storm or sunshine as they respond to these unseen intimations. Then comes, it may be, the cool zephyr, wafting heavenward the song of the bird, the fragrance of the flower, or the murmur of the forest; or it may presage the wind rising as storm-king when

"God sweeps in the wrath of His judgment seas,"

urging billows of flame to this dread work, or uplifting the depths of ocean as it ingulfs the pride of nations. Thus speaks our Saviour of the work of the Spirit, as of "the wind which bloweth where it listeth; thou canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth;" and with the Pentecost baptism came the sound of a mighty rushing wind.*

* Acts ii. 1, 2; 2 Kings vii. 6.

The wind which goes about from one end of heaven to the other is manifest, of course, only through the presence of the air to which it gives movement. So the Spirit comes to the soul where the word is engrafted. To attain this presence is to be risen with Christ,* and to rest in the power of God.

As the wind stirs and quickens the air, so (with office and personality as distinct as that of Jesus of Nazareth) the Holy Spirit works with the Word of Christ, making plain the way of life prepared by prophet and apostle. So that this "way of holiness" becomes the highway on which all nations shall walk as they turn Zionward to reach their eternal home.

As we see this expanse of firmament, with its power of life here, and revelation of heavenly things beyond, we may well say, "The heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament showeth His handiwork; day unto day uttereth speech." As we watch the air pressing in and around all things, seeking as it were to redeem them from

* Col. iii. 3.

death and corruption, entering even where sunshine is shut out, the joy of heaven itself may well fill the soul, saying, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? — Neither death nor life, height nor depth, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

DAY OR AGE (ÆON) THIRD.

GEN. i. 9-13.

THE ROCK OF AGES;

OR,

Christ our Redeemer.

When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I. PS. lxi. 2.

For He is the Rock; His work is perfect. DEUT. xxxii. 4.

CHRIST OUR REDEEMER.

THE ROCK OF AGES.

GEOLOGY tells us of an era when the ocean reigned supreme. An unbroken waste of waters spread around the globe, covering it as a garment. This is one of the physical facts of our earth's early biography, of which the first distinct sketch or intimation is found in the Bible. God said, Let the dry land appear. The gentle touch of the air comes, setting its circle on the deep, and behold, "the depths are broken up," and the "earth is made glorious in the heart of the seas."

The conquering Word led captive the floods of flame, and it now sets its royal signet on the unfathomed depths, and these monarchs of might

both render tribute service; the one upholding the earth, while the other aids in fashioning its varied form as Jehovah prepares it to be inhabited. This preparation is mainly effected through the subtle agency of the ocean of surrounding air, cherishing and moulding it into organic form and life. In this third æon we find the earth "founded on the floods," or "stablished in these threefold depths of flame, water, and air."

The expression of these verses is eminently suggestive of length of time, or almost timeless extension of ages. The work of Nature here outlined may be seen repeated wherever the rocky coast is gaining ascendency over the sea: gradually the sandy shore and half submerged marsh land are raised or redeemed into dry land.

Through the healing influences of fresh air and light, the more highly organized forms of life begin to appear: at first the hardy coast plant and sturdy shrub; soon grasses cover the spreading plain, and forest life adorns the hill-side. A recognized succession of forest growth springs up from evergreen to oak, and finally fruit tree, bearing

fruit after its kind. This successive forest life must take its centuries of growth; a period of time, compared with which the days of the years of the generations of man seem nothing. Long as the forest age is when compared with human life, yet even that sinks into insignificance when contrasted with the period of the upgrowth of the dry land, and the conquest of the seas; while this last so passes beyond all our limited standard of human measure as to be absolutely timeless. In this one æon, two of the slowest processes of Nature picture to the soul the birth and growth of continents.

First, to break the drear monotony of that wilderness of waves, rises the sharply-defined rock, which becomes, as the ages grow, centre and stay of wide-spread fields of life, — the mountain range stretching from earth to heaven, with its rocky summits cleft and shattered with the long war with the elements, over which it now holds dominion from sea to sea; while it rises on the low coast line as a bold headland, forming perpetual signal to the weary seaman, of rest near at hand.

Finally the cleft mountain tops become lost to view in the clouds of heaven, whence they bring the pure river of life to the far-off plains below.

Above the unfathomed depths of the life of humanity rises "the Rock of Ages," slowly gaining ascendency over the seething, restless flood. Each year adds to the fullness of meaning of the prophetic words, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto Me." This cleft rock, with its summit now passed into the heavens, brings from thence to those who are far off, as to those who are near, the pure water of life; yet it is in abiding presence with us as sure refuge and defence.

Its majesty and strength embody the prophecy, "Behold, a King shall reign, and a Man shall be a hiding-place; a refuge from the storm: as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." In our daily life, no matter how far off in the wilderness we have wandered, the river of life from that smitten Rock is near, and we may come and drink freely, and the soul's thirst will be satisfied, for "that Rock is Christ."*

* 1 Cor. x. 4.

"He is the Rock, and fortress, and deliverer; my strength, the might of my salvation, my refuge, my Saviour.* I will call on the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved." Thus sang the sweet singer of Israel; and history has often shown us the mountain fastness as the stronghold of freedom for the poor and oppressed, and there only they found peace; giving us some type of our sure refuge with the Redeemer, and the way we should come to Him for safety.

David says, "The Rock of Israel spake to me." So let us learn to abide in Him, that we may hear His voice speaking to us, and that our lives may be hidden in Christ from all that can harm. Hidden in the clefts of the Rock, we may stand, and while learning of all His goodness, see the glory of God pass before us.†

When the great wave of judgment — that tidal wave of redemption — shall break over the world, with its purifying fire, filling the earth as a sea of glory; then shall we go to the clefts of the Rock for fear of Jehovah, and the glory of His

* 1 Sam. xxii. 3. † Ex. xxxiii. 21.

majesty.* When the glory of God comes again to dwell with man, and asserts its kingdom on earth as now in heaven, then may each soul turn to its sure refuge, saying, with child-like confidence,

> "Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
> Let me hide myself in Thee."

Far back in the ages, above the timeless floods, those rocky summits rose, as it were, the gateways of time — portals for this temple of life, our earth, which, builded up by the creative Word, arises from its twofold baptism of water and fire into glorious beauty. Inspired revelation takes us back to the beginning, that we may stand by this grand gateway, and view the long procession of life entering on its strange drama.

This is tragic enough on the mere earthly side; yet even in its chiefest tragedy it makes manifest the fullness of the riches of the love of God in the life and death of our Redeemer.

As we gaze on the varied hosts, we cannot but echo this hymn of the ages, "Lift up your heads,

* Is. ii. 21; Luke xxiii. 30.

O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord, strong and mighty — even the Lord of Hosts."

The procession of life pauses not in this world. The Rock of Ages, founded in eternity, passes into highest heavens. This glorious mountain gateway extends its magnificent archway beyond this earth's limits, standing in perpetual type of Him who has said, "I am the door; if by Me any man enter in, he shall be saved. Whoso cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." We have glanced at the beginning of the record of God's revelation; and at its close we may stand with the inspired seer* on the top of the high mountain, and see this Lord of Hosts, whose name is the "Word of God," leading the armies of heaven; and the hosts of life sweep into the home their Leader went to prepare — the great city of God, with its tree of life and streets of light, resting on Zion, the Mount of Gladness.

So is the Christ made manifest as Head of all.

* Rev. xx. 10.

In Him do all things consist. Hidden in Him are all forms and sources of life. Before His word vanish all anguish of sin and care; and He is made known as "all in all," through time and eternity, being in life and death the sure Refuge and abiding Foundation, and no other foundation can any man lay.

The Mountain of God.

"In the mount of God it shall be seen: the Lord will provide."* We have seen the grand mountain stand forth above the world's life as the Rock of Ages, or the Mighty Angel, who, clothed with the clouds of heaven, stands on shore and sea,† holding out the Book of God to the disciple.

We have watched how in fullness of time this mighty mountain range extends its dominion from sea to sea.‡ Even now in mid Pacific those mountain summits are still rising, as the "Isles of the Sea;" bearing from the first palms of victory, they press on and heavenward until they become crowned with eternal snows, like a great white cloud of glory.§ These summits are at

* Gen. xxii. † Rev. x. ‡ Ps. lxxii. § Is. xlii. 10, 12.

times lost to sight in the heavens, and again they are seen like embodied light, as in our far Western land the sun glances across the icy Sierras, giving some dim suggestion of the resurrection, power, and glory of the One who has passed from earth's mountain summits to the height of heaven; as well as a vision of the celestial home He prepares for the children of the kingdom.

Through Holy Writ we can trace a mountain range, founded far back in eternity, its summits glittering with light, across the darkness of historic record and tradition. In steadfast, superb power, it towers above the surging depths of past and present; even extending its outposts afar in the dim future, recalling the words of the prophet, "I will make all my mountains a way. Sing, O heavens, break forth into singing, O mountains, for Jehovah hath comforted His people. Lift up your eyes round about; and behold, I lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and my standard to the people, and thou shalt know I am Jehovah. They shall not be ashamed who wait for me, and all

flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and Redeemer." *

Let us look through the sacred record, and gather a few of the rays of eternal light reflected from these summits, and learn a little of this mountain way. Those first seen are the *mountains of rest*, where the few children of faith, who received and obeyed the Word, found safety from the destroying flood as the frail ark rested on Ararat, having weathered the storms of months' duration.

Without pausing on the strange history of Mount Moriah † we will gather its lesson: "In the mount of God it shall be seen: the Lord will provide;" which has proved an unfailing watch-word for the Church in all the ages which have passed since that hour.

A little later in time another mountain is made memorable as a mount of God; for there God communes with His chosen leader, who discerns His presence through the flame, resting on the acacia, or common thorn-bush of the desert. This

* Is. xlix. 11, 16. † Gen. xxiii.

memory gave tone to the whole life of that leader, and his farewell blessing to the tribes of Joseph is, "Blessed of Jehovah be his land for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, for the deep that coucheth beneath, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush."* Stephen, the first martyr, recalls this scene of the One who dwelt in the bush,† which in Hebrew speech would point us to the Nazarene, ‡ as the village of Nazareth takes its name from the bushy growth around it.

The voice which sounded from the clouds on Sinai has sounded through all time. We will not linger where all God's people have bowed in homage; the wondrous scenes it discloses are written already in our hearts, making it forever the mount of revelation.

On the grand summit of Mount Hor Aaron dies — the first high priest according to the typical law. On the Mount of Vision § Moses dies, — having seen the land of promise even to its utmost

* Deut. xxxii. 13–16.
† Acts vii.
‡ Matt. iii. 23.
§ Deut. xxxiv. 2, Pisgah.

sea,* — the prophet and leader whose self-denial and power make him, through the coming centuries, prototype of the Christ.† The mysterious dying of these servants of Jehovah "in the mount," according to the word of the Lord, cannot but recall the mystery of death on Mount Calvary, where we behold our King dying in obedience to the law and the prophets, which He came not to destroy, but to fulfill. In the going home of the first high priest and leader, a gleam of the resurrection light comes to us, which burst forth in its fullness on the first Easter morning.

In that memorable scene in Bible history, where Elijah stands on the mount of God, the "still small voice" speaks to him, making itself manifest as of greater power than the whirlwind which cleaves the rocks, the earthquake shock, or the tempest of fire, which have vanished into the past before its coming. ‡

So the lesson of the mountain tops is always the same; even the stern grandeur of Sinai, with its typical law, serving to school the heart and mind of humanity to see Jesus. §

* Deut. xxxiv. 2. † Acts vii. 37. ‡ 1 Kings xix. § Gal. iii. 24.

Let us pass from historic to prophetic record: "It shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the tops of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and many people shall say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and *He will teach us* of His ways, for from Zion shall go forth the law, and the word from Jerusalem."

Isaiah, the prophet of Christ, is the mountain prophet. Inspiration constantly leads him back to this type; and in these verses the natural uprising of the mountains seems to be taken as the grand symbol of Zion, the mount of gladness and holiness, which rises to heaven as the Rock of Ages; in other words, the Church, built up by the power of God, to be keeper of the Word, with Christ its Leader and Head.

"Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our God;
He whose word cannot be broken
Formed thee for His own abode.
* * * * *
On the Rock of Ages founded,
What can shake thy sure repose?"

The earliest association with Mount Zion is as the refuge and stronghold of King David the penitent, over whose life rolled a fierce, fiery baptism of agony and suffering from foes without and within; from these his "soul flees to God as a bird to its mountain."* Coming to the Word, he finds it stronger than these foes, more powerful than the depths of sin, which colored his life with the scarlet brand of shame;† cleansed with its life-full healing, his psalms of humility and thankfulness have become the songs of the ages — echoed often enough as lip-service by many who are further than he from true heart-service, in being further from repentance. Feeling the power of the Word and its presence in the soul, it became his leading thought to find for it an abiding-place among men.

For a while, on the hills of David's city, is seen the cloud of the Presence over the Holy of Holies, where is enshrined the Word of God. As these shadows of the Presence fade away before the hardness, carelessness, and self-righteousness of those blessed by them, the voice of the prophet

* Ps. xi. 1. † Ps. li. 7; Is. i. 18.

grows plainer, speaking of the mountain of God: "In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make a feast, and He will destroy in this mount the veil that is spread over the nations."*

So frequent is this type with the prophet, that it may have given pretext to the question between the Samaritans and Jews about their worship,† which our Saviour answers, saying, "Neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship; but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshiper shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. The woman saith, I know that the Messias cometh, which is called the Christ, who will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I am He."

Looking through the letter to the spirit it embodies, we discern, through the long-continued type of the mountain peak that would rise above earth's mountains, the Rock of Ages making manifest the grace and truth of God.‡

The Hill of Zion, the Mount of God, stands not

* Is. xxv. 6. † John iv. 20. ‡ John i. 17.

only for Christ, but includes those who are His; symbolizing the Church of God, of which He is Head, and which gradually, from its first appearance as a mere foothold above the chafing flood, becomes the Mount of Refuge and Gladness known through all the earth. Who shall ascend into this holy hill? is the cry of the Psalmist; and now the song of the church militant is, —

"Come, ye who love the Lord, and let your joys be known.

* * * * * * *

The Hill of Zion yields a thousand sacred sweets
Before we reach the heavenly fields, or walk its golden streets."

The song of the prophets was, "How beautiful on the mountain the feet of Him who bringeth glad tidings! O Zion, who bringeth good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain, lift up thy voice, fear not, say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord God will come with a strong hand; He will feed His flock like a shepherd." *

So the hearts of the people were imbued with

* John x. 11; Is. xl. 9, 10.

the thought, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." "As the mountains stand round about Jerusalem, so standeth the Lord round about His people."

Centuries pass. Captivity has fettered the careless people of God, who, reckless of the Word, and teaching the commandments of men as sacred, are seen lapsed from their brilliant prosperity into darkness, even as the shadow of death. On the hill country of Judea shines forth the light of God as the angels sing, "Glory to God in the highest; peace on earth." The shepherds, hearing these strains of praise, seek out the Babe of Bethlehem, and having seen the Christ, return to their daily tasks filled with rejoicing.

Years go by. The darkness seems only to deepen, while Jesus of Nazareth goes about all Galilee, teaching, preaching the gospel, and healing all manner of sickness and *dis-ease* among the people, and great multitudes follow Him.* Seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain, and He opened His mouth, and taught them.

* Matt. iv. 23, 25.

Do we, even in this remote land and time, need to be told what He then taught?

Again He has compassion on the multitude, and feeding them with the few small loaves, sends them away, and goes apart in a mountain to pray. The storm arising, He walks forth on the midnight wave to defend His disciples.

Standing on the Mount of Transfiguration, the eternal light shines through His earthly surroundings, and we begin to see Him as He is; while in dread darkness closes the solemn vision of Mount Calvary, crowned with its cross and the Crucified.

Finally, from the Mount of Ascension,* Jesus of Nazareth is received into the clouds of heaven, from which "in like manner He shall return," and "His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives."† The prophecy reads, "How beautiful on the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that saith to Zion, Thy God reigneth. The watchmen shall lift up the voice, and sing together; they shall see eye to eye when the Lord will bring again Zion."

* Mark xvi. 19; Acts i. 11. † Zech. xiv. 4.

This is taken from the custom of placing, on the high lands around a city, watchmen to herald the coming of any foe, or of any royal visitor. These heralds were placed near enough to see one another's signals, or "eye to eye," as the prophet says.

So this mountain way may be traced from Sinai to Calvary. The summits rise in continuous chain, through the historic period, as heralds of the King of Kings, from Sinai to Calvary — a royal succession, making manifest the law or word given, and the law or word fulfilled; while beyond, on either hand, they are seen through the dimness like isles of light. In the past, we see afar off the mountains of rest; while, at the very close of revelation, the Spirit takes us into the high mountain,* where is seen the city of God descending from heaven upon this great centre of all natural beauty. So through the future we see these "mountain tops appearing," to recall to us that the end is not yet; they rend through the veil of darkness which shrouded Calvary; the Light of

* Rev. xxi. 10.

Life is seen upon its cross, and it becomes to the wide world the mysterious Shekinah, making manifest the presence of God. The noblest of God's children, who have lived from that time, say, with the zealous apostle and splendid scholar, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"In the cross of Christ I glory, towering o'er the wrecks of time,
All the light of sacred story mantling on its head sublime."

And God saw that it was good. (Gen. i. 10.)

We have seen how the earth was born of flame and water, and its dull chaos of matter transformed to organized beauty of mountain range and valley. We have watched the mountain tops in their slow uprising to heaven's height, where, crowned with light, they seemed to stand in perpetual memorial of that first-revealed blessing of God.

The grandeur and sublimity of the mountain range appeals to all; but inspiration, in leading us

to watch its slow uprising, with steady growth heavenward, teaches us the simple elements of that grandeur, showing us the perfect work of patience.

The essential greatness of this quality is not always felt, but it forms the corner and key-stone of the rarest traits. Our Saviour bids us in patience possess our souls, in contrast to the world's life, which, drifting in vagueness, becomes possessed, as it were, by outward accident, — turned in any direction by the chance of the day; while the Christian, with fixed purpose to seek first the kingdom of God, — His rule and presence in the soul, — will find all things else associated closely with such true allegiance. We, who keep the word for Christ's sake, are companions in this "kingdom and patience of Jesus;" and in the thought of God toward us, — made manifest in "fullness of time" on Calvary, — we learn something of this patience, or long suffering, as chief element in the boundless love and tenderness of our God.

The Rock of Ages shines forth more and more

with transfiguration light as time flows on to eternity; from Ararat to Zion,* the Mount of God stands as the refuge and rest for His people. In this divine benediction, we find promise and prophecy of a God at hand, and not afar off; that is, of an Emmanuel, God with us, the God of all patience and comfort, made fully known in our New Testament. No longer servants of the God of Judgment, we are now at home with the heart of God. Holding fast to the "word of patience," † the blessing of God must crown our lives, for such is the promise.

The splendid results of this patient allegiance to God are taught not only in the grand mountains always pointing heavenward, as it were the great cathedral spires of this fair temple of God's building, our earth; but in other phases of Nature, the same lesson is learned. By the subtle agencies of heat and moisture, the stubborn, unprofitable clay is changed in process of time to the royal ruby; the unstable, treacherous sand becomes the cloud-like opal with its heart of fire;

* Rev. xxi. 10. † Rev. iii. 10.

while, yet more wonderful, the coal dust, whose touch is pollution, becomes the diamond, radiant with light, and more lasting than the mountains. The same power which built up the mighty hills, and in their dark caverns glorified these fragments of earth, clothing them with light and imperishable beauty — the same power of God seeks to work in our earthly lives, and with baptism of water and fire, or the Word and the Spirit,* fashion our souls into jewels of Jehovah,† to abide with Him forever. In jewels of the rock or earth, there are two requisites for the perfect crystal: one is the constant presence of the agent of transforming power; the other, that the line of crystallization be not disturbed, by which all the particles are gathered toward one invisible central point; and then the law of its crystallic life begins, and is perfected. So with our souls; seeking first the kingdom or rule of God, the abiding Presence enters with its newness of life, and we are re-created in the lost likeness, and become jewels of the Rock of Ages.

* John iii. † Mal. iii. 17.

Let this fixed purpose, with its loyal allegiance, enter our life, — all its littleness, its waste moments, its daily chances come under the divine touch, — and our lives must bloom with the fruits of the Spirit (joy and holiness), as the earth with flowers and gems. "Hold thee still upon God, and wait patiently," and He will be found working in our daily lives, breathing through the inmost soul. "I have known thy patience," while making us finished homes in His temple of life.

And God said, Let the Earth bring forth Grass, and Fruit Tree, yielding Fruit after its kind; and it was so. (Gen. i. 11.)

God gives the word, and over hill and valley rise up the answering host, the unnumbered multitudes of plant-life, with flower and fruit, forever and unalterably after its kind. Each kind, even to the tiniest flower that blooms, is a thought of God — a special creation; teaching us of the infinite mind, as well as of the sacredness of each *individuality*, whether in plant or soul life, setting

that as the royal signet of Creatorship, and loving token that God is our Father.

From pole to tropic, from sea-shore to mountain-crest, comes forth the thronging life, never yet numbered by man. "Consider the lilies of the field," and the mystery of life meets us. Of these myriad million forms of life, only a few thousand are well known to man. All have their use and power, and though theirs is an open secret, it is for the most part as yet unlearned.

The grass of the field is made the staff of life; yet, if we try to enter into the source and manner of its being, human reason is dumb before the infinite mystery of life, and bows before the almighty power of the Word, which speaks, and the stones of the earth answer back with the lilies of the field; and with the blessing of God, the earth is decked with the garlands of life and victory. The word is spoken, and the low grass of the plains, the forest life of the hills, become the daily life of earth. Where the Word entered, came life, with its bloom and fruitage in varied succession; for "the grass withereth, and the flower

fadeth, but the word of our God abideth forever." *

The same Word speaks to our souls, and what is the answer of our daily life? for each soul has in it a God-thought; each one is a special creation, and in the sought presence of the Word and Spirit abundant bloom must be found.

Meanwhile, through the slow-flowing ages, the serried ranks of the thick forest lifted their stately heads heavenward, and in due time became enbalmed in Nature's storehouse, where leaf and flower of each day or æon lie in that great herbarium; one grand volume of which is formed by our coal strata. Together they form a great company of silent witnesses to the power of the creative Word. The light itself, scattered broadcast over those comparatively lifeless eras, is treasured; and from this rich storehouse, filled with the wealth of untold ages, we are now cheered and warmed with the sunshine and bloom of the past. So, in the Creator's sight, all is sacred, and nothing, however slight, is of little worth. All these

* Is. xl. 8; John xii. 34.

facts of Nature remind us of the Presence which seeks our lives, to sanctify even the least things with its pure, loving atmosphere, and in whose sight "even the hairs of your head are numbered," and not a sparrow falls to the ground unheeded.

Plant-life specially suggests the thought of patient obedience. The luxuriant willow grows by the sunny water-course with its refreshing shade: afar in the Arctic Zone we find again the willow; but under its adverse circumstances, it reaches only a few inches in height; yet, in every angle of leaf and branch, it is an unmistakable willow tree. The noble evergreens, often of colossal size, are distinguished from one another by the number of slender leaflets grouped together.

Through just such slight distinctions the great orders of natural science have been traced out; showing us the sacredness of little things in the sight of God, and reminding us how our lives must be judged and perfected, not by the greatness of their work, but by the fixed purpose of obedience and allegiance which should animate them.

The earthly life of Christ teaches the same example of perfected obedience to the law or word of life, even unto death on the cross; while the lives of the patriarchs, enrooted deeply in the Rock of Ages, stand out as conspicuous examples of humbly taking God at His word. Thus walking with Him in simple obedience, they became not only blessed in themselves, but a blessing to many, and are uplifted before the eyes of the nations as the stately cedars of Lebanon — even trees of the Lord's planting.

In the development of this manifold plant-life, the same powers, so often noted, of heat and moisture, are the active agencies; while the same fixed centre or line of growth marks all healthy growth as the plant ceaselessly presses upward to the free, full light of heaven, and the flower unfolds its loveliness in the sun — all of which only shadows forth the true allegiance of the soul to God.

Oh, for this steadiness of upward looking and allegiance in Christ's Church! What an untold wealth of joy and bloom would fill the wide world, as it does to-day each heart which has gained this

open secret! Guided by inspiration, we may take Nature as one of God's appointed messengers, "leading us to His holy hill, where it pleases Him to dwell."

The earth stablished in the floods is now "decked with its offspring," and the beauty of plant-life sweeps like a vast ocean, — surging even to the hill-tops, — until it reaches a limit where its green life-wave ceases in the white death-robe Nature sometimes wears. This rests on the mountain-tops as a crown of glorious ephemeral crystals, formed from air and the dew of heaven which feeds the forest life below; while it shines forth with the untold glories of the life beyond and above all earthly form of beauty, to which death itself is but the gateway.

So stands the Rock of Ages, our great High Priest, who, bearing on shoulder and heart the names of His people, has passed into the heavens, where "He ever liveth to intercede;" and always since that hour has the Light of life and immortality shone plainly through the opened gateway.

And the Earth brought forth Tree, yielding Fruit after his Kind, and God saw that it was Good. (Gen. i. 12.)

"He cried unto the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree, which, when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet. I am Jehovah that healeth thee." (Ex. xv. 23, 27.)

In the wilderness, the multitude thirsted unto death by the side of the bitter waters. The Lord gave a tree, which, cast obediently into the waters, healed as it touched them; the bitterness was changed to sweetness, and the dying lived.

We have looked on Calvary, crowned with its death tree; and now, looking through the centuries which stretch between us and that dark hour, we find on this smitten tree engrafted the Life of the world.

The barren death tree stands out as the smitten root of Jesse,* foreshadowed in a measure by the *withered* almond bough or rod of the high priest,† which bloomed and bore fruit after its kind, and then was brought into the holy of holies — the

* Is. xi. 1. † Numb. xvii. 8, 10; Heb. ix. 4.

very presence of God. In a word, we have before us the Tree of Life, for the healing of the nations.

For the tree of the field is man's life: in any siege thou shalt not cut it down,* is written in the Law; showing God's tenderness over all His works. Again it is written, "Cursed † is every one who hangeth on a tree;" ‡ yet even thus has the Christ suffered to redeem us from the curse of the law; bearing for us our burdens of sin and pain, that we, dying to sin, should live unto righteousness, and so be healed; and the evil graft of our poor life become good and fruitful, in abiding union with the Tree of Life.

Again we see the perfect work of patience, and how experience worketh hope. The hour which seemed the final triumph of force over righteousness, injustice over meekness, has in it the seed-grain of immortality — a leaven of eternal power drawn from obedience to the Word. In the brief saying, "To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise," in answer to the prayer, "Lord, remember

* Deut. xx. 19. † Deut. xxi. 23. ‡ Gal. iii. 13.

me," we find how our soul's life, by the good graft of penitence and the leaven of prayer, may to-day become one with the resurrection life of our Prince and Saviour* in the paradise of God. With far more power than the stern, far-off grandeur of Sinai, with its trumpet tone of thunder, does the cross of Calvary draw heart and eye of humanity to worship Him in whom all contradictions are reconciled, and all uncertainties set at rest. While the soul's cry still goes up from the weary and sin-laden, "Lord, remember me," the "Sin-bearer," with "whose stripes we are healed," draws near, even the Lord of life and death, to "heal and make alive."

In revelation, all realms of Nature are searched to bring tribute to their King, who is head of all, and to shadow forth His attributes and praise. In the light of the Spirit, all Nature seems one grand parable of the Godhead,† and Christ the Word, who comes forth from God, that the soul may find its home.

From time to time we find how the heathen

* Acts v. 30, 32. † Rom. i. 20.

mind has caught up fragments of the revelation offered to all, but carelessly rejected by the mass of mankind, until its only hold is in strange myths, curiously woven from eternal truth and human fancy. Few of these have taken stronger hold than the mysterious Tree of Life; whose sacred attributes and power of healing, from the divine Being it embodied, were worshiped by our own Saxon forefathers and the Norsemen. Until comparatively recent times, Igdrasyl, or the Sacred Ash, held power over these devotees; while in the sunnier East we find the Sacred Fig or Banyan revered for its exceeding fruitfulness, and its wondrous life-power, shown in the myriad life springing from one common root or tree; fit emblem of the free communion of new life, springing from the seed of faith, the Word of God.* So, from East to West, far as the sun shines, the heart of man responds to these emblems as they shadow forth the mysteries of the Godhead and the power of the Word. But revela-

* Matt. xiii. 19; Luke viii. 11.

tion only can be a sure guide, and the Spirit's presence must be sought as Interpreter, for unto "Christ's flock it is given, *thus* to understand the mysteries of His kingdom."

And the Evening and the Morning were the Third Day. (Gen. i. 13.)

The long, dreary night of this third age or æon ends in the glad morning of perpetual bloom; God having stablished this earth, born from the changing, restless sea, for a tabernacle of life; while day unto day uttereth speech, night unto night showeth knowledge, "testifying of the Creative Word." "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth, from everlasting to everlasting (age to age) Thou art God." "For a thousand years in Thy sight are as yesterday, seeing that is past as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are like the grass which groweth up." So teach us to number *our days* that we may apply our hearts to wisdom. Let the beauty of the

Lord our God be upon us, and stablish Thou the works of *our hands.* "One thing have I desired of the Lord, to behold the beauty of the Lord; for in the time of trouble He will hide me in the secret of His tabernacle. He shall set me on a Rock."

DAY OR AGE (ÆON) FOURTH.

GEN. i. 14–19.

THE LIGHTS OF EARTH AND HEAVEN;

OR,

Christ the Light.

I am the Light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. JOHN viii. 12.

The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory. Ps. lxxxiv. 11. JOHN i. 17.

CHRIST THE LIGHT.

FAR as language can be traced in the distant past, certain words are found which in varied form reappear in every tongue. One of these primitives or roots of speech (aur) is found in its Hebrew form, in verse 3, translated light. Somewhat modified, it occurs in verse 14 (maurt), in which form we find it in Exodus xxxv. 14, where it indicates the flame of a lamp, or, in this case, that of the sacred light-bearer, or candlestick of the sanctuary.

Again, in the phrase, two great lights (Hameroth), the word is from the same source, and indicates the sun, as simply a light-bearer. The facts of sunshine, suggested in these few verses, have been but recently learned by science; as, for instance, that the sun's light comes mainly

from the photosphere or envelope of gaseous flame, which is quite independent of its main mass, the exact nature of this mass being unknown; but the spectroscope makes daily advances on this far off region of mystery. The light of the photosphere is subject to immense variations in intensity from magnetic or chemical changes, so that the sevenfold light of Isaiah (xxx. 26) is entirely within range of physical possibility. On the other hand, the sun may have existed for ages as a dark star, or might become so now in a very short time. That the sun shall be darkened, and the moon not give her light, and the stars cease shining, is an expression often found in the words of our Saviour and the prophets. "All the lights of the light of heaven will I make dark, and set darkness over thee, saith the Lord God."*

From the essential light, then, is prepared, by the Word of God, our sunlight, attempered and modified for earthly life as it now is. The earlier æons call us to look with the inspired writer at the eternal years of God, but now the word comes,

* Matt. xxiv. 29; Joel ii. 31; Ezek. xxii. 8, margin.

and the light flowing through these timeless æons is regulated to rule man's little day. It is far from the truth to say that the Bible limits these days as to time. The Jews even, bound to the letter as they were, held that the days of God were as a thousand years, while inspiration in this fourth æon speaks of *the beginning of time*, — thus pointing to the eras that were absolutely timeless, — and bids us watch for the day when "time shall be no longer." "The wreck of matter and the crush of worlds" are but the promise of a new heaven and new earth, and that stormy dawning of the eternal day will lead to perfect redemption for the children of light.*

In speaking of these earlier manifestations of light, it is well to keep in mind its manifold sources and varieties, from the intense electric flash of earth-born light to that of the far-off star. The most brilliant among the fixed stars are not those nearest our earth; and within record, marked variations in color and intensity of light are frequent. In some cases this occurs in fixed periods;

* Mark xiii. 24, 32; Luke xii. 28, 33.

in others a gradual increase or waning in brilliancy through centuries, traced only by the fact of their differing in rank now from the earlier catalogues. Others, again, have burst into intense conflagration of months' duration.

Mathematical analysis indicates, in some cases, the probable existence of dark stars, where no ray of light is visible, reminding us that any such change in our light-bearer need not affect the mass or outline of the star, for such is our sun, — one among the many fixed stars, so called by the ancients in distinction from the planets or wanderers, now known as the sun's satellites, of which our earth is one.

From the probable manner of the formation of the sun and its attendant planets, the cosmical flame-lights must have surged through and beyond the space now tenanted by our solar system for ages. It would be useless to attempt to measure, any more than to estimate, what periods of light and darkness may have followed each other; as these must have been limited more by the fierce electric and chemical changes coincident with the

formation of crust and fixed orbit of these heavenly bodies, rather than by any revolution on their axes.

Some idea of this intensity of action we can gain even now, as the spectroscope and other instruments enable us to watch the magnetic sun storms, which are often echoed in earth's tempests, while at other times gaseous flames of vast dimensions burst forth with volcanic force from regions, it would seem, far below the photosphere, or usual source of light.

These tempests tend to form cloud masses that imprison each orb with its own flames, neither transmitting nor receiving rays of light from the worlds without; and even as this state of things passes away in the constant change of that mobile matter, the atmosphere would be heavily charged with vapor, transmitting heat far more readily than light. Some idea of this we may gather from the thick, murky air of tropic forests, spreading over vast areas of marsh land, where heat and moisture prevail, rather than light. Such, we are told, must have been the state of the earth's atmos-

phere during the growth of the forests of our great coal era, which form so marked a feature of the third æon.

So we have some glimpse of the possibilities and probabilities of light, before the era when the King of kings set light in the firmament of heaven as ruler over earthly life. All light, whether earth-born, cosmical, or essential and eternal, cometh from the "Father of light," who prepares for us the sunshine to bless our daily life, and fit us for the perfect glory which *abideth* in the heavens. Of this eternal or essential light we catch some glimpse in Scripture. St. Paul, for instance, as he travels, in the hot haste of his zealous good works, through the heat of the Syrian noon, with "its sunbeams like swords," sees a light from heaven brighter than that sunshine. He cries out, "Who art thou?" as he hears the voice speaking to him, and as the answer comes, "I am Jesus of Nazareth," he prays, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The answer to this prayer we find in his humble, patient waiting for three years, until the abiding light of the Presence

leads him to supernatural power of working, even as it seeks to lead us all.

Again, on the Mount of Transfiguration, we see something of this light, which is again associated with the Christ. At the close of revelation, when time ceases in eternity, the city of God, that home with the many mansions, has no need of the sun, for the glory of God enlightens it, the Lamb is the light thereof, and it is thus the "Lord God giveth them light." Of the power of this glorious gift, the believer in the Word has some consciousness even here on earth, for God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The Dawn or Day-Spring. (Luke i. 78, 79.)

Let us look again at this primitive of speech (aur), which stands for light, and follow it through various shades of meaning among many races; in a word, trace out its kindred. There is one association, which must always be hallowed; in the Hebrew (in plural form) we find it in the urim

and thummim, or sacred breastplate, worn on the heart of the high priest when he entered the holy place; the meaning of the name being light and perfection, or, as commonly rendered, revelation and truth. So we of the Christian church, with the revelation of truth in our hearts, and the Spirit of truth teaching and leading us, not only enter the Presence, with its safety and healing, but should so commune with these sacred teachings that we can freely minister of the fullness God gives to those who stand without, whom Christ still seeks.

In the Egyptian, this word became the river or flood,—used often for the Nile,—from the original meaning of the root, to flow, or flowing swiftly; whence, also, it is aptly and beautifully applied to the undulations of light; and more indirectly, we have, through the Greek, hour, or the measure of swift-flowing time. The prosaic Latins preserve it in aurum (gold), from the color of the sunshine, while the plastic Greek tongue gives us numerous derivations, among which we possess aureola, halo or crown of glory, and aurora, dawn or day-spring.

So the threefold great thoughts of light, the saviour of our physical world, time, the measurer or ruler of life, and the glory of dawn, blend in the beginning in one.

This fourth æon of sunlight is the era of dawn; all things as they now are begin there. The beginning of time, which is the preface of our present life, the fountain of life and light, are made manifest, as, through the tender mercy of our God, this day-spring from on high visits the earth.

We are specially told that the facts of this day of Jehovah are for signs and seasons. Can we fail to see, as we glance through the inspired record, the prophetic promise of this early dawn; whose wondrous glory fades before the coming of that Day-spring or dawn of eternity,* with whom is the source or fountain of essential light,† and from whose coming all our daily life dates anew as from the beginning?

Let us dwell reverently on the speech of this day of God as the word comes to us through its light; though it be foreign to our natural tongue,

* Luke i. 78. † Ps. xxxvi. 9.

we cannot but learn how "the heavens are telling" of the glory of God,* and the earth echoes back His praise.

This era of the dawn, with its glory and wonderful revelation, foretells that dawn over the world that would bring light even in the shadow of death. For this long-promised coming waited the people of God, in the darkness of captivity, as "they who watch for the morning," † saying to priest and leader, "Watchman, what of the night?" The answer is, "The morning cometh, and also the night." So we may have seen the day-dawn come slowly on in some cloudy morning. Alternately the storm clouds prevail with their gloom, or, breaking away, become rainbow-hued messengers of the glory of the light that *must* conquer. So came the dawn of the Light of life on earth. ‡ In feebleness long the darkness struggled against it, and still struggles, though the victory, sealed in blood, is manifest and inevitable.

Now, as over the wide earth this "morning light is breaking, the darkness disappears," and

* Heb. i. 3. † Ps. cxxx. 6. ‡ John i. 4; viii. 12.

though the shadows of life may still be as thick darkness, their very blackness only proves the powerful presence of the sunlight. As day succeeds night, so in our soul's life darkness alternates with light, that we may be the better fitted for the eternal weight of glory that shall be revealed gradually to the children of light, as our Saviour calls the believers in the word.* Even here we may become partakers of that glory † which flows from the Sun of Righteousness, ascended in high heaven, with beams of perfect healing and perfect power, ‡ into the hearts of the faithful.

The association which will be constantly kept before the believer by the God-given name of the holy breastplate worn on the high priest's heart makes it a "memorial forever" from God Himself that life and light are found with the revelation or word of God. The blending of the threefold leading thoughts of the primitive of light in one source recalls the Bible summary in this era of day-dawn of the manifold powers of light, being also threefold: 1. To rule or regulate; 2. To divide

* John xii. 36, 46, 48, 50. † 1 Peter v. 1. ‡ Mal. iv. 2.

between; 3. To give light or enlighten. "God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day:"* "and God said, Let them be for signs and seasons."†

"The sun shining in its strength"‡ is a perfect emblem of a king in his power — we may say of the King of kings — as it is almighty over the physical life and forces of this earth, and from the creation is pointed out as the one to rule the day; that is to say, the ruler of light and life.

The full measure of this rule has been but recently recognized by science, which is daily making discoveries of its nature, and of the widely extended sway of its kingdom. The sun rules to bless, and its unnumbered subjects are in thorough and glad allegiance. Enthroned far off in heaven, its presence is powerful everywhere, even to the ends of the world, except when deliberately shut out. Perfect in majesty, omnipotent and omnipresent over earth, we cannot doubt of whom it is a sign, as it measures out in kingly life-power the wealth and span of life to each zone from pole

* Gen. i. 16. † Gen. i. 14. ‡ Rev. i. 16; 2 Cor. iv. 4, 6.

to tropic. The changing seasons tell of its power, while the rush of Niagara's many waters, as well as the glancing foam, are but a whisper of the force and motive power it brings on earth; while, the wide world over, the least flower that blooms turns its face to the sun, the life giver, and seeks first that touch from heaven to fall on its lowly life, and perfect it. Even to the stateliest forest tree, all nature presses upward toward heaven's light; if this pure intuition lived also in the soul of man, each daily life would bloom as the spring-tide with its resurrection power and fullness of life.

God gave the sunshine as a sign, and what it signifies is written out in letters of light, that none might fail to know and love its lifeful meaning; that none might fail to *seek, and therefore find,* the sunshine of the soul — the presence of Christ, the ascended Saviour, who is the Sun of Righteousness.* The healing beams of light come with true resurrection power, making manifest the royal victory over darkness, death, and evil, while as promise and memorial of His coming shines forth

* Mal. iv. 2.

our sun, at each day-dawn, when the night of darkness has passed. The light shines in the darkness; the darkness comprehends it not. Shutting it out, limiting it, as we do, it is still "the wonderful"* above all other things, — so much so, that if the record of the blessings wrought, the many things done through the power and presence of this king,† in *one of the little days* of this world's life, should be written, every one, even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written; neither could they be numbered, any more than the wild flowers that bloom the world over in a day, or the rays of sunshine that fall in unheeded blessing. The sun, king of our earth's life, was at the beginning of time crowned with light, decked with its glory as a coronation robe. Even as kings of old were anointed by priest and prophet in sign of their power from God to rule on earth, so in "fullness of time" is made manifest "the Sun of Righteousness," decked with the glory of God,‡ with all power in heaven and on earth.

* Is. ix. 6. † John xxi. 25. ‡ Heb. i. 3; Is. xlviii. 11.

The word translated to rule, is that usually associated with kingly authority; while the same root conveys the idea of speaking in parables.* This blending of thought has not been clearly traced, but it is only a king over the truth he would convey, who can suitably render it in parables. Whatever the true chain which binds these thoughts in one, the association cannot but recall the One who teaches the world in parables. Veiled in human guise, His whole life on earth forms a parable, through which shines the light of life, as with a word the Christ heals the multitudes who follow Him; and now "not here, but risen" to the throne of heaven, the powerful presence of our King comes everywhere, even as the sunshine, to seek and save the lost, whether captive in the wilderness of sin, or sitting dumb in the night of sorrow, or in the dark shadow of death.

Over the darkness of the world dawned the true eternal Light. The gladness of that sun-rising was the gospel or glad tidings of the Christ, who

* Ezek. xx. 49.

hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light;* of whose appearing to the church and to each soul the prophet speaks, saying, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come: the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee: darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen. The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."† "The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgressions."‡ "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun;" it is a gift from God, precious in itself, yet most precious as the sign from God of "the Light of the world" which abideth forever.

Christ, the ascended Saviour, the Sun of Righteousness. (Mal. iv. 2.)

The glory of the dawn, the splendor of the sunshine, are songs, without words, of Nature's praise, the great picture parable which teaches of the ascended Saviour, the King of Righteous-

* 2 Tim. i. 10. † Is. lx. 3. ‡ Is. lix. 20.

ness, called by the prophets the "Sun of Righteousness," as His appointed emblem is the sun shining in its strength, and the sunshine is but the sign or signet of His power. His earthly life was a parable of God's friendship for us, the noblest expression of His supreme love. Let us grasp firmly the human hand held out* to guide us in our darkness, and to uphold us in weakness, and we find the touch comes to us as that of the King of Life, quickening the soul with strength and healing from God. Of old they touched the hem of Christ's garment, and were healed; but now, coming to the Christ, this wonderful touch brings with it His resurrection power; so that to follow Jesus is to be partaker of this power, enabling us to look and live in the light which no mere man can approach, where He abides enthroned, who only has immortality,† even our King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

* Matt. xi. 28.

† 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16; Rev. xvii. 14; ibid. xix. 13, 16.

The Light to rule the Night.

"He appointed the moon for seasons." (Ps. civ. 19.)
"The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light." (Prov. vi. 23.)

The sun is still an unknown land; the ever-present sunshine shares in the mystery of its being. Among the positive facts concerning it is its threefold or triune nature, which we know as the light, heat, and actinic rays, which are made visible or manifest to us by the light-ray. The wonderful and varied powers embodied in these rays act either in unity or separately and individually. One marked instance of this separate action is in the light that rules the night, which is the light-ray of the sun reflected to us by the earth's satellite or servant, the moon.

The changes of the moon ruled in great measure the rites of heathen festivals. Diana, Queen of the Night, held firmer sway than many a famed monarch. Allusion to the Saturnalia attendant on some such celebrations we find in the ornaments worn by the Jews when lapsed into idolatry.*

* Is. iii. 18; Judges viii. 21, margin.

These changes have always formed a readily available method of computing time, and this is still the case in our current months, to which the moon gives its name. Through the Old Testament, and even in the New, we are often reminded of this; the Jewish sacred service depended entirely on the time of the new and full moon, and chief of all their feasts was the Passover, which began the sacred year. The Christian church also keeps this as high holiday under the name of Easter, which comes at the time of the Passover full moon.

We have seen a little of the sun's glad rule over the children of eternal light, but here we are led to consider the rule this light sent of God exercises over the outside world which knows not God, and how this has been a sign to them.

We look back to the time of the Pharaohs, the founders of the pyramids, whose building shows such rare skill. The one of whom we have most knowledge is seen in sacred history confronting the word of God with his own power; the plagues or warnings from God came unheeded, and thick

darkness fell on the land, but "all the children of Israel had light." Now these Israelites were slaves of Pharaoh; they were also the people of God. May we not date the phrase "children of light" from this?

Pharaoh still questions the power of the Word, and the answer from God will live through time, as His "two-edged sword" is caused to pass over the land, dividing the people of God unto Himself. The command from Jehovah was, "Take the blood of a lamb without blemish," "sprinkle the door-posts, and when I see the blood, I will pass over, and will not suffer the destroyer to smite." And at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born of Egypt, from Pharaoh to the captive in the dungeon, and the cattle, but to the Israel of God, who had given heed to the Word, came redemption and its freedom.

The Lord commanded that the Passover full moon should become the beginning of months, — the first month of the year, — and the day a memorial feast to Jehovah forever.* The blood

* Ex. xii.

of the "lamb without blemish" becomes a memorial sign from God of the night when the Word went forth "conquering and to conquer."

The life of the Jewish race, as a nation, dates from that night, while the record of God's visible church has there its beginning. There is intense interest associated with several of their Passover celebrations, but none greater than with that held in the little upper room in Jerusalem while the Roman Cæsar held "all the world" in an armed peace.

In that little room we find Jesus of Nazareth, the true Prince of Peace, saying to His disciples, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." Strange words, yet precious, taking the heart back to that wonderful night, with its mighty redemption, which God had commanded to be kept in glad and sacred remembrance; and a new "ordinance" for this feast was instituted as He took the cup, saying, "Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins: do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of Me."

We pause at Gethsemane, where, on this Passover night, we find the Prince of Life again contending with the Destroyer; and the dread scene prepares us to watch one hour with the Crucified, and as the rocks are rended, and graves yield their dead, learn to gaze beyond the rent veil of humanity that shrouded for a time the "Light of the World," and look forward to the final Passover of sin and pain, when the Lord of Life, the Wonderful, the Counselor, the Prince of Peace, returns to meet the Church triumphant.

Let us watch by the cross until we learn something of the power of the "eternal redemption" revealed to us, mightier far than that the Israelites rejoiced in, and since "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," keep this feast of God in "sincerity and truth." *Thus* to keep the feast is to joy in God* through our Lord Jesus, by whom we receive "atonement," or the "reconciliation" of friendship with its abiding union and presence, which forms our constant and mighty salvation.

There is much of mystery, and even gloom,

* Rom. v. 2.

around the cross, but the mystery is promise and prophecy of full revelation to the earnest-hearted seeker, while the gloom as well as mystery test the nominal disciples of Christ, whether they will follow wherever the Word may lead, or stop afar off, measuring the things of God by their own self-appointed standards, while they may also remind us that the subtle and wonderful thoughts of God toward us may well elude our human powers, thus teaching us to listen and watch, prayerfully and humbly, as the Word comes forth from God to make Him manifest to the waiting soul.

Whatever the mystery, and however little care or thought the world may give to the Christ crucified, yet it has become the prominent fact of its history. The cross is the standard of Christendom; therefore let us watch by the cross until our hearts are quickened by the patient, wondrous love revealed there, and listen to what God tells us of its meaning and life-power. "In the volume of *the Book*" His loving revelation is written; and keeper of this stands the church

to-day, appointed from God to reflect to the world the healing light of the Sun of Righteousness.

This light, which is the way of life to humanity, is this God-given way of "the Crucified," and this way is strait and narrow as the sunbeam, that it may lead us the more directly home; mercifully so appointed that the child, the weak, the suffering, need not err or wander from it; yet it is a highway whereon the most splendidly gifted in heart and mind have found room and verge enough as they pressed forward in glad homage and allegiance to their Leader and King.

Years come and go, moons wax and wane, and still the feast is kept as the church holds forth these signs, and words, and facts of faith, to the myriad souls who join the communion or living unity of our Prince of Peace. How this reflected light has held sway on earth even the most superficially versed in history need not be told; on the many eras and incidents which throng the memory we will not dwell; not even on the Reformation of Luther, which, based as it was entirely on the

Word of God, has shaken the thrones of Europe, and given rise to the mild form of self-government called a Republic: but will merely mention, in passing illustration, one marked episode, which forms, as it were, the most brilliant romance in near two thousand years of history; that is, when the "kings of the earth" arose in contest for the Holy Sepulchre, and the fate of Europe seemed to hang on the battles of the Crescent and the Cross.

"God said, Let there be lights, to divide between day and night, and light from darkness." (Gen. i. 14–18.)

"Thou hast given me the shield of Thy salvation, Thy right hand hath holden me up, and Thy gentleness hath made me great." (Ps. xviii. 35; xxxiii. 20.)

To choose between good and evil is our constant life; from childhood each day brings its message from God, saying, as of old, "I bring heaven and earth to record this day. I have set before thee this day life and death, good and evil; choose *now* whom ye will serve, that thou mayst love the Lord thy God, and obey His voice, and cleave unto Him, for He is thy life."* In the

* Deut. xxx. 19, 20.

lower forms of nature, life is maintained by the process of natural selection, or a constant dividing off of the things unsuited to well-being. Even in plant life we see the forests built up, and the blossom perfect into fruit, by this daily work, aided by the sunshine, of selecting such elements as are essential to healthful development. Man alone, of all the creations of life on earth, seems to have lost this direct instinct or intuition of choosing only those things which tend to his best welfare, and therefore needs, more than the flower needs the sunshine, the direct revelation of God or the Word, to cleave to which we are told is life. The flood of sunshine which spreads around the world searches everywhere, dividing off the elements of life from the corruption and decay, which vanish at its presence; so it at once quickens the pulse of life with new vital energy, and cuts off or cleanses away the manifold sources of evil. So comes the light of the Sun of Righteousness from heaven to the soul as a shield of safety, dividing between the children of light and the darkness in which evil and sin flourish with their rank growth.

As the sunshine sweeps down from heaven with royal power to cut off the darkness, so came the "Light of the World" to earth, and such is the light of Christ's salvation in the heart of man, coming to seek the lost; that is, those wandering in darkness, who have not seen the way of life: and to save or heal; that is, cleanse the sin-sick, or give strength to the weary. Cleansed with this fountain of life and light, divided off from evil and corruption with this mighty "shield of salvation,"* hidden from the plagues of life,† so that they cannot come nigh, and as we behold the Christ coming to earth, we see the "Man who shall be as an hiding-place, a covert from the tempest," "and as rivers of water in a dry place," who should "fulfill the words of the prophets," we may well say, How "happy art thou, O Israel," "who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help."‡ For the Lord God is a sun and shield, and no good thing will He withhold from him who leads a godly life. The typical law, with

* 2 Sam. xxii. 36. † Ps. xci. 4–11.

‡ Deut. xxxiii. 10; Ps. cxix. 114; lxxxiv. 11.

its constant commands of separation and purification, taught the people, though dull of heart and self-willed, of the strength and beauty of holiness; but the law is our schoolmaster to bring us to the Christ who prays, "Sanctify them, O Father, through Thy word; Thy word is truth." * So we learn that the commands of God's word are not grievous, nor arbitrary, but simply the call of the Good Shepherd to the flock, that they may gently be led home to the fold. He seeks out the lost and helpless as ardently and thoroughly as the sunshine. The Levitical priesthood ministered to the people of the things of God; their daily work was to lead them to divide between the clean and unclean, the pure and impure, and thus to heal them, as well as by direct forms of healing, to save them from the plague or pestilence which walked through their camp, as chief emissary of the Destroyer, when this law had been disobeyed. Let us learn from the record God has given us of the wilderness multitude who professed allegiance to the Word. Just on the entrance to the promised

* John xvii. 17.

land, with its wealth of blessing,* we hear them question the authority of high priest and leader appointed by the Word, and attested by miracles of power: "The whole congregation is holy; why then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord? Ye take too much upon you." Moses pleads with them, but they are too much absorbed in trying to belittle his power to heed the words of God, and the plague goes forth, slaying its thousands. Then Moses said to the high priest, "Go quickly, and make atonement for them;" and Aaron put on incense, and made atonement for the people. And "*he stood between the living and the dead*, and the plague was stayed." The same spirit met the Christ, as He walked the streets of Jerusalem, from those who should have been ministers of the Word of God and its healing, but who had taken away the key of knowledge, and entered not in themselves. The same spirit would pursue Him now, even since His wondrous ascension,† where, in the "depths of God's divine," our High Priest is able to save to the uttermost

* Numb. xvi. † Heb. ix. 11, 24, 28; ibid. vii. 25, 26.

them that come to God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession, and offers before the throne the prayers of the believer, which rise as the incense* of heaven, and which, coming in the power of His name, cannot pass unanswered.†

The Spirit of God teaches us through His Word,‡ which is given to enable us to discern the things of life, and shows us our "great High Priest" decked in the precious garment, — the blood-dyed mantle of atonement, — holding which, we can be no more cast out§ from the glad light of the Presence: as the hem of Christ's garment on earth brought healing, so now we may grasp this, and feel the peace and power of God, and His salvation, around us as a shield, dividing between our soul and all that can harm, and separating us unto the kingdom of light. So blends the life-power of the King, with the ministry of separation, cleansing or healing of the priest, in Christ, the Sun of Righteousness; whom the Word of God teaches us is

* Rev. vi. 8.
† John xvi. 23, 24.
‡ Heb. v. 12-14.
§ John vi. 37.

our Prophet, Priest, and King, whose light comes for the freedom and healing of our race.

To give Light on Earth. (Gen. i. 15, 17.)

"In Thy light shall we see light." (Ps. xxxvi. 9.)
"The entrance of Thy words giveth light." (Ps. cxix. 130.)

There is much about the life-power and healing of the sunshine which is involved in mystery as to the why and wherefore of its action, and much that recalls to us that its power is not of this earth, or, in other words, that suggests its heavenly origin; but now we are led to consider it in the office noted by the inspired writer; that is, to give light on earth, or enlighten. As it dwells on earth, taking efficient part in daily work, its office seems so inferior or secondary to those already noticed, that we might overlook its significance if not specially pointed out by inspiration; yet without its presence, life, even if possible, would be worthless — a mere tissue of confusion, unrest, and ignorance.

The phrase to *give light* recalls to us that light is a gift from God, poured into our daily life in

unmeasured fullness, to enlighten or make plain our way on earth, and so enable us to communicate or commune freely and intelligently; without it we must be strangers and aliens to one another. Revelation of the real nature of our surroundings and our pursuits depends on the presence and coming of this light on earth; in it, therefore, centre and abide enlightenment, communion, as well as revelation and the freedom and safety springing from it.

This light was diffused through the firmament, or body of air surrounding the earth, and as "the day-spring takes hold on the ends of the earth," * we know that its power will extend not only from east to west, — that is, as far as our human sight can fathom, — it is not limited by the extent of one nation even, but as far as the expanse of firmament, even to the ends of the world, shining on all with measureless fullness of light for the service of man, enlightening every one "who cometh into the world."

The glad light of this heaven-sent guest jour-

* Job xxxviii. 12, 13.

neys all around the earth, which turns to meet it as "clay to the seal,"* each nation successively receiving the signet of the blessed Presence and the Revelation, which quickens it into full, free life; and each morning, as the day-dawn returns around the world, heart praise rises to the Giver of all good gifts for the message, straight from heaven, of the Lord's mercies, for His compassions fail not; they are new every morning.† Great is His faithfulness; therefore will I hope in Him. The Lord is good to them that wait for Him.

So, in fullness of time, to the world fettered by Cæsar, to the listening ear of captive Judea came the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord" — even John the Baptist, sent before the face of the Highest.

He was a bright and shining light, in which the

* The meaning of the Hebrew term for earth is of uncertain origin; it is traced by Parkhurst and others to the root, to run or revolve. This striking expression in Job (xxxviii. 14) is taken from the form of the ancient seals, which were a sort of cylinder, turning on a central pivot or axis, beautifully cut, — often from stones of considerable value, — as found in the ruins of Nineveh, &c., by Layard and Rawlinson.

† Lam. iii. 23.

people rejoiced for a season; and with him closes the long roll of prophets* who point us to the coming, crucifixion, and ascension of our Lord. Their "sure word" is a gift to us from God, who has "prepared these lights of the light of heaven," that seeing we might see, and hearing might understand with whom we have to do. So strictly is it that he comes before the face of Him of whom he speaks, that our Saviour appears in the very midst of his ministry, coming forth from God, who is light,† to become the Light of the world; yet "He dwelt among men,"‡ and was known as Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth.§ As our prophet we would now regard Him. In the special office of predicting the future, apart from the various prophecies of his earthly ministry, we find St. John the Evangelist, being in the spirit, listening to the "voice of the Son of Man, whose face was as the sun shining in its strength," as He unfolds the future of the church and world, even to the end of time; but it is as He dwelt on earth we

* John i. 45. † John i. 5. ‡ John i. 14.
§ Matt. xi. 11; Mark vi. 15; Luke iv. 24; John vii. 40, 52.

would now specially consider the lesson of His life.

We read in the inspired words of the leader Moses, "A prophet like unto me* shall the Lord raise up from the midst of thee; Him shall ye hear." That we may feel the force of this, let us look at the peculiar position of Moses, and the work God sent him to perform. His first duty was to make known the word and will of God. Aaron, at his wish, is appointed to share this duty, and become "prophet or spokesman" to Pharaoh, and finally high priest to the people. A prophet like unto Moses, therefore, is one whose words would be the words of God; and since our Saviour so urgently refers us to Moses, the Psalms, and Prophets,† while His whole life was in constant and avowed allegiance to them, the lesson to us must be, that the will of God is, that they should be held most sacred.

Moses was the one sent from God to establish, through the power of the Word, a mighty redemp-

* Acts vii. 37; Deut. xviii. 15, 18.

† Luke xxiv. 44; John v. 39-47.

tion, resulting in the freedom of millions, and uniting them in one communion of law and worship. He pauses in the desert while the assembled multitude prepare a tabernacle, chief feature of which was the shrine for the Word, or the holy of holies, on which only rested the visible sign of the Presence.

He gives them a *form of worship*, in which the first thing to be kept in remembrance was this redemption through the blood of the Passover sacrifice; also a *new code* of law, one marked feature of which being the years of jubilee, ushered in with trumpets, as the name denotes, and celebrating the erfect rest and freedom of the people of God.

Jesus, our prophet and leader like unto Moses,* speaks to each soul, saying, "Follow Me;" and though we may pause with Him awhile in earth's desert-places until we have learned of Him to keep the Word sacred, and when this Word is enshrined in our hearts as most holy, the shield of the Presence will be manifest around us, and

* Acts iii. 22.

its wealth of promise ours, even the inexhaustible riches of Christ; chief end of whose law is rest to His people, and an eternal redemption. Of the form of worship which He founded, He enjoins but one rite, which keeps in remembrance His own death, and the typical Passover sacrifice of the "lamb without blemish."

Jesus says to us, "If ye continue in My word," "ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Let us then stand fast in this liberty with which Christ would make us free.*

Freedom and rest, release from care, through the presence of God leading us, form the end and aim of this revelation or word of God which Christ brings to us, which, with the earlier revelation (to the power of which His whole life on earth is witness), form the most sacred heritage the past brings us. Coming from God, who is light eternal, the entrance of these words † in our daily life must have untold power to enlighten ‡ and make manifest the truth to those who receive it in their hearts and minds — a way of mighty redemption

* John viii. 31, 36. † Ps. cxix. 104. ‡ Ps. xix. 8.

from ignorance, limitation, and confusion, as well as peaceful and free communion; in a word, as the sun beams on the visible world, so must they have power over the invisible world of the soul's life.

To realize the practical working-power of this revelation in the daily life of the world, we need only glance at the progress and development of Protestant countries, where the word of Christ, the Light of the World, is freely received and honored among the masses; while, to prize the liberty with which He would set us free, we have only to compare the condition of these masses now and in the days of Greek philosophy and Roman tyranny, remembering that we are the descendants of these* Gentile masses for whom Christ lived on earth to bring them the light of the word; through that, and that only, was the yoke of Saxon serfdom snapped from our immediate ancestors. Looking at all this, we may learn that to walk in the light of Christ† is to walk in the light of the living.‡

* Luke ii. 32. † Ps. xxvii. 1.

‡ Job xxxiii. 28–30; Ps. lvi. 10–13; Job xxiv. 12, 13; Eph. i. 17, 18.

Light in the Firmament.

The firmament, which was gradually prepared in the course of ages, as the way of life on earth, is now crowned with the light of heaven; through it we see the glory of the light, while it diffuses and subdues it for our limited human powers, which could not well bear the full, untempered glory of the sunshine; while the brightness of heaven is but the halo about the throne of the King and Life-giver. This wide earth, which is built up without hands, through the power of the Word, its builder and maker being God, seems to our human standard an almost measureless temple of life; but it is merely that porch, called Beautiful, by which we enter the great temple of eternal life now standing ready for us in the heavens, the home of our ascended King. Between us and that hangs the veil of the firmament, even as the veil of the Jewish temple divided from the holy of holies, into which we pass but once, as this veil of heaven is held aside for us by the Angel of Death, who comes now only at Christ's bidding.

So, then, the blue sky, or this wide expanse of firmament, forms the veil of the Godhead, revealing while it conceals or subdues the eternal glory: it folds around us with the touch of life, and its brightness is simply the halo of the Presence, of Emmanuel, God with us, mighty to save.

He made the Stars also. (Gen. i. 16.)

We read of the dawn of creation, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy, recalling to us the mysterious bond of union which from the beginning has linked together in one life the creations of earth and heaven. Let us try to gain some idea of this vast brotherhood, and the subtile sympathy with which the least variation acts and reacts through its extent. "As the shadows on the dial only prove the presence of the sun," so the darkness, as night comes, only shows us worlds of light otherwise unknown; and as we begin to realize, though with difficulty, that the glory of our sunshine, which sometimes seems to overwhelm our earth with its wealth of warmth and splendor of light,

is one among many brethren, which are heralds of light through the dark spaces of the universe — the hosts of heaven, extending as islands of light across its unfathomed depths — that myriad host of which the Lord of Hosts, and He alone, telleth the number, for "He calleth them all by their names." He leadeth them like a flock; and so we learn that they form a part of the flock of the Great Shepherd, our King of Kings. As their light beams from worlds so far off, and yet brought so near by this light, we learn that this Lord of Hosts seeks us out.

This Good Shepherd calls us, for "thus saith the high and lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, *I dwell with* him that is of a contrite, humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, the heart of the contrite. I form the light and create darkness, and I will give the treasures of darkness and hidden riches, that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that I the Lord, which call thee, am the God of Israel:" "and let the earth bring forth salvation, for I the Lord have

created it; I create the fruit of the lips; peace to him that is near, and to him that is far off, and I will heal him:" and so the Word constantly shows us this blending of the things of heaven and earth, the things of God and man.

Our Saviour, coming from these far off worlds to bring the light of heaven, takes up these words of God, saying, "If a man love Me, he will keep My word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and *make our abode with him*." "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Rejoice, because I go to the Father."

And from the Saviour, ascended to the throne and power of God, the promised Spirit comes with the gift of peace that passeth all understanding, filling the heart and mind of the disciples with its sweetness and rest. These heart-words of the Saviour came "as a morning without cloud, as the clear shining after rain," to the disciples in their night of sorrow.

The Star of the East.

We dwell now on these words of our Saviour, as *their* fulfillment marks the realization of the promise given in the Star of the East, or Morning Star, of the speedy coming of the Light that would conquer the darkness of the world — even that of the Sun of Righteousness, ascended high in heaven. As prophet or herald of this perfect light came that star, known to the Gentiles as the Star in the East, and to the Jew as the Star of Bethlehem. Who, that ever has watched through the long hours of the night, has not seen with delight the advent of the morning star; not only for its wondrous beauty, but for the promise it brings of the glory of the dawn, and the light near at hand, its daily coming is a perpetual memorial of the glad light of Christ as He dwelt on earth, and a wonderful promise and prophecy of that advent — not to the Jew only, but the Gentile, to whom our Saviour was specially known under this sign or emblem.

Before the Israel of God entered the land of

promise, the Gentile prophet had spoken these "words of God" to the Gentile king:* "I shall see Him, but not now; I shall behold Him, but not nigh. There shall come a Star out of Jacob; . . . out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion;" while the prophet Isaiah, speaking of this dominion of the Prince of Peace, says, "Of the increase of His government there shall be no end."

God, who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, gives to all nations their signs and tokens, that everywhere the earnest seeker may find Him, and come home to His truth. The Gentile nations adored the lights of heaven; and of these their wise men had gained a profound knowledge. This Eastern lore involved extensive intellectual culture, on which their science of astrology† was based, which, with its strange "horoscopes of fate," has influenced many a modern mind of might in the courts of Europe; so in this "Star of the East," which the wise men saw and followed to where the young child lay, we find how gently our heavenly Father seeks to

* Numb. xxiv. 16, 17. † Is. xlvii. 13; Dan. i. 20.

lead the earnest-hearted home, however far their culture or birth may have placed them from the light of living truth.

The Day-Star.

"I am the bright and morning star."

The apostle urges us to give heed to the "sure word of prophecy," more powerful even than miracles of manifestation to lead us, until the "day-star dawns in our hearts;" or to let their words of light lead us, as the wise men of the East, to see and follow this Star of promise.

The First-born of Many Brethren. (Rom. viii. 29.)

So this starlight is one of the many crowns of our Leader and King of Kings* — precious to us not only as prophecy of His resurrection power near at hand; but we find that, to follow where it leads, takes us far beyond earthly limits to share in the wide universe of life beyond the grave; or where death and the grave lie far behind us on our way of light. With our faces steadfastly set toward where the morning-star would lead,

* Rev. xix. 12.

we behold, as in a glass, or reflected to us, the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image by "the Spirit of the Lord." It guides us to the heaven where He is, or rather it brings that heaven near us, that we may learn to see Him as He is, and be like Him. Having endured temptation, having tested our allegiance to the Word, we shall receive from our Elder Brother, the Lord of Righteousness, the crown of righteousness prepared for those who love Him.

The first-born son receives from the father the right to rule, and to act as priest or minister of the things of God to the rest of the family or kindred. So the Only Begotten of the Father holds rule over us as Prince of the kings of the earth.* While following the course of the day-star, we find it is also chief or leader of the hosts of heaven, in which we behold one star differing from another in glory. We have read of the dark stars, which are without the crown of light, and have seen how, through the Word, even our petty world was fitted to receive light, and perhaps be

* Rev. i. 5.

in itself a light-bearer. We receive from this some lesson of how our souls' darkness and chaos may, through allegiance to this Word of power, be fitted for a new birth or life, and crowned with it, as the stars with the light of heaven, and so join the great host of witnesses around the throne, the "first fruits from the dead." They wait with their Leader for those who follow them in the patience of faith: partaking of His baptism of suffering on earth, we become partakers of the baptism of Light and Life of heaven, which fits us to become kings and priests unto God, for such is His will concerning us. To minister of the things of God requires that we be in heart-allegiance to a known God, and such we can only find by seeking Him in the sacred Word of His revelation.

Kingdom of Light, or Heaven. (Luke xxii. 29; 1 Peter ii. 9.)

The power and wonder of this endless life, and the rule in which we are called to share, grow upon us as we learn to trace the glory of our sun-

shine to its home, the far-off star, and find that, besides *our* planet world, many others are swayed by its least movement. We learn, still further, to follow our sun's course as it seems to pass from the East, its birthplace, to the remotest ends of the earth, making manifest the one way of light by which we trace that highway of the heavens, on which the starry hosts, crowned with the light prepared of God, move in ceaseless and rejoicing obedience around and toward the great unknown centre and throne of power, that gives animus to all.

Each star, as it moves, sways its world of planets — king and priest of God's light to them — a type of what God would have us become by being rooted and grounded in that Word of Life, which is able to make us wise unto salvation; and feeling our own insufficiency, seek that sufficiency of God which is promised to those who would be taught by the Spirit. Of such our Saviour speaks, saying, "They shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father." But one star differs from another in glory; so, according to our

faith, or the hold that we take on these words or promises of God, it will be unto us; for it is only through fast hold on these that we can bring eternal help to others, or minister to them of the things of God, and this it is to be king and priest to Him. "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." *

This universe of planet around its sun, and suns revolving about one another, in beautiful kindred of common life, is shown us as it peoples space, making its "depths a way of light for the redeemed to pass over." All of these are in steadfast allegiance to the central power, which we cannot but picture to ourselves as the throne of God. In the midst of that throne, the Apocalypse reveals to us the Crucified Saviour, the Lamb of God, leading the hosts of heavenly life; † holding sway over worlds unrealized by the mind of man, and unknown to the telescope of science. Beholding the visible universe, we may feel some-

* Dan. xii. 3. † Rev. v. 6, 10, 12; vii. 17.

thing of the might expressed in the words, "All power in heaven and on earth is given Me," and of the Presence that is with us even to the ends of the world, as the sunshine.

I will give Him the Morning Star. (Rev. ii. 28.)

We cannot here enter into the various callings held out to the redeemed in the kingdom of light — the gifts of God which crown them for eternity; but unto those who watch for the day-star and the light that follows, comes the word, "Hold fast till I come," "and I will give the bright and morning star." Steadfast allegiance, then, is the root of this victory which overcometh the world, — even our faith, — and the reward is, to be not only ministers of the Word of God on earth, though with stammering lip and alien tongue, but heralds of light to worlds unknown, as the day-star to our earth — angels through the universe of the love and glory of God. Again we catch a glimpse of the morning stars and the sons of God working together, and may echo the words of the Psalmist, "Praise Him, all ye stars of light."

Following these lights of the Light of heaven, we begin to form some idea of the "depth of the riches of the love of God" manifested toward us when He, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory as the glory of the Father,* full of grace and truth; but not on earth can we fully realize it; only when risen with Christ can each soul say, —

> "When I stand before the throne,
> Decked in beauty not my own,
> Then, Lord, shall I fully know —
> Not till then — how much I owe."

For Signs, for Seasons, Days and Years.

(Gen. i. 14.)

"I thought it good to show the signs and wonders the high God hath wrought. How great are His signs; how mighty are His wonders. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom." (Dan. iv. 2, 3.)

Plato has said light is God's shadow; but long before his lifetime, we find the same thing had been taught in the lights and shadows of God's

* Is. xlii. 7, 8; xlviii. 11.

revelation; indeed, on the first page of the Inspired Word we are told that the beauty and glory of the creations of God, and the light which reveals them, are but signs from God, the significance or key to which, is given in the Word.

We read in the prophets, "Verily, Thou art a God who hidest Thyself, O, God of Israel, the Saviour."* "Thus saith the Lord, who created the heavens, I said not to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye Me in vain. There is no God beside Me, a just God and Saviour. Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; the word is gone out of My mouth that unto Me every knee shall bow."† We learn here that so far as God hides Himself or veils His power in signs, it is to meet us as a Saviour; to draw the eyes of the whole world to look that they may live; but more than this, we also learn the way He has chosen to lead His people is in order to test their allegiance, whether they will keep His Word or not;‡ and the measure of their love for it He tells us is the measure or sign of their love for Him.

* Is. xlv. 15. † Rom. xiv. 9–11; Phil. ii. 10, 11. ‡ Deut. viii. 2.

While we have looked for the meaning of some of these signs from God to our soul, we have learned to feel the steadfast nature of the Word of which they illustrate the power. "Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven; Thy faithfulness is unto all generations; Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth; they continue unto this day, according to Thy ordinance."* "And the word of the Lord came, saying, If ye can break My covenant of the day and night, that there should not be day and night in their season, then may also My covenant with David be broken, that he should not have a son to reign."† In the coming of this Son of David‡ in fullness of time, the wide world of Christendom rejoices to-day; while we are told that the children of His kingdom of light cannot be numbered, and His priests, any more than the hosts of heaven or the sand of the sea. Thus these signs, and the seasons that follow them, only lead us again to the Christ, who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever;" while the

* Ps. lxix. 89, 90. † Jer. xxxiii. 19–21.
‡ Rev. xxii. 16; Matt. xxi. 9.

sun shines in the heaven to assure us that He is faithful who promises, and to keep in our minds the steadfast, noble nature of the Word, and quicken our souls' allegiance to this sacred gift of God, which reveals His love toward us, and which leads us from earth and the changes of time to dwell with Him in eternity: therefore, "blessed be the name of the God of heaven, forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. He changeth the times and seasons; He removeth kings and setteth up kings; He giveth wisdom to the wise; He revealeth the secret things; He knoweth what is in darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him."

DAY OR AGE (ÆON) FIFTH.

GEN. i. 20-23.

THE LIFE OF THE WATERS, AND OF THE AIR;

OR,

Christ our Life.

Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you. For it is not a vain thing for you — it is your life. DEUT. xxxii. 47.

The words that I speak unto you, they are life. JOHN vi. 63.

CHRIST OUR LIFE.

And God said, Let the Waters bring forth abundantly. (Gen. i. 20.)

"O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all. The earth is full of Thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great. There is that leviathan, whom Thou hast made to play therein. These wait all upon Thee, that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That Thou givest them, they gather; Thou openest Thine hand, they are filled with good." (Ps. civ. 24–28.)

"Seek the Lord, and ye shall live; . . . seek Him that maketh the seven stars, and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: the Lord is His name." (Amos v. 6–8.)

THE sunshine having gained full power, the earth receives its crown of life, as the "moving creature, and the fowl that may fly," enter the home prepared by their Creator, who is

thus made known as "the Wonderful, the Counselor, the Mighty God," and who becomes more and more manifest to us, as we learn from these thronging tenants (whose home for a while we share) of the special providence of God in all earthly life, caring for its least need; and we watch the tenderness with which the Good Shepherd leads as a flock the countless tribes of life; giving to all their "meat in due season." *

From the beginning, this animated life had been prophesied: it was foreshadowed in the pulsing of the flame-world which reigned in chaos; in the throb of ocean; in the dash of the wave, and the rustle of the breeze that whispered through the wild forest of the higher life that would come. Even the far-off stars echo this prophecy, as, by their slow, stately movements, they seem to guide the changes of the seasons; subduing the rude elements to touch with gentleness this frail physical life, which grows up and fades as a flower. The very sunshine tells the same story, as at eventide there is a "hiding of its power," and over the

* Ps. cxlv. 15, 16.

busy hum of life comes a hush while that most wonderful of all Nature's wonders, "sleep, death's twin-brother," holds sway, giving strength for another of earth's little days of life. The brief hours of light, which alternate with as brief a night, when contrasted with the timeless days of Jehovah (which have no such rhythm of ebb and flow, or pulsing of power), show forth the tender mercies of our God over creature life in this exact adaptation to its limitations.

In all this we may behold the Jehovah, who will come to rule, "who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted the heavens with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains." * With all these visible things of earth and its life, to teach us of the "invisible Godhead," † and the power of the Word, which spoke, "and it was so," even as we now see it, we are indeed without excuse if we lift not up our eyes on high, and "behold who hath created these things." It is with this thought the inspired prophet seeks to

* Is. xl. 9, 12. † Rom. i. 20.

move the people, who, through carelessness of this Word, were drifting into thorough desolation, saying, "Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood, from the foundations of the earth.

"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these, and bringeth out their host by number? He calleth them all by names; by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power. They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength." *

The star-light taught us of the life that should come to reign on earth, with its myriad tribes, even to number which, is a token of the greatness of the power of Jehovah; while in our world today we find how man, sharing this life of earth, has received, as chief of these tribes, the sceptre of dominion; to be used not as a mere tyrant, but with a grateful sense of the trust thus received from the God who "feedeth the raven," † and before whom not a sparrow falls unheeded.

* Is. xl. † Job xxxviii. 41; Luke xii. 24.

But the stars that shone on those dim ages of the past, shine on us with the same prophecy of better things to come, showing that the end is not yet: even in their stillness they are eloquent, as the pulsing of their light thrills us with dim prescience of a life beyond, crowned with glory, where death may not touch even the tiniest flower.

The Growth of the Ages.

Successively these æons have told the story of creative power. In each, after its kind, the wonderful thoughts of God have been set in type as it were, for the thousands who should be born on earth, gifted with intelligence to read this glorious hieroglyph of God's love. Each age shows us some one element, or phase of life, in gradual development or growth to full power, when for the time it becomes the central point of the earth's existence, or ruling monarch of that day. On this gradual growth the mind is fixed, and as we watch the wonderful facts, the untold variety that is drawn out in such development, we are prepared in a measure to realize the thoughts

of God in our soul-life, and seek humbly to receive the facts of God's revelation concerning it.

Of the minor features of interest, — even the possible forms of life which may have existed in these periods, — nothing is said, that we may better learn the main lesson of the day. Our earth's surface now repeats certain phases of somewhat similar development, from which may be pictured the possibilities of these earlier æons.

The word æon, as we have before noted, suggests the idea of this development of light from darkness, order or organization from chaos, &c., or the perfect growth which comes from the egg when brooded with care. So these days of chaos, cherished into perfectness by the presence and care of God, suggest that, in the unrest of our little days, the presence of the Spirit, with His purifying baptism of fire, must be sought and found, that our lives may bloom abundantly with the fulfilled promises of God.

Successively, the dread powers of the flame-world, the mystery of ocean, the grandeur of the mountain-growth, are as eloquent as the thunder

and flame of Sinai of the power of this Word of God.

Successively, in each, our powers of admiration and intelligence seem exercised to their utmost; but crowning all these, and far exceeding them, come forth the glory and beauty of plant-life; from the palm, rising in victory above the sea-shore, where the proud wave bows its life out on the strand, to the lichen that crests with its tiny wavelets the rocks of those mountain summits, which, as time passes, crumble into dust under the subtle influence, everywhere asserting itself with such power that, at the coming of this life-wave, the mountains are bowed.

Plant-life alone, to our limited faculties, would seem to shadow forth Infinity; but one step into the æons of sunshine brings us to the "creature which hath life, and the bird that might fly in the open firmament of heaven;" in other words, embodied intelligence, incarnate in physical form, — and the rapture and enthusiasm of mere admiration is hushed in humility and awe, as the Creator, who before manifested His power, now shows forth

His love and tenderness in caring for this new world, with its mystery of "soul-life."*

In this word soul, as given by the inspired writers to all forms of animated existence, our heavenly Father would perhaps wish to teach man of his responsibility toward his dumb kindred, with whom he is joined in one vast communion of will-power and intelligence; while, in the distinction so constantly made in the Word between soul and spirit,† we are reminded that the division line between the race of man and the other tribes of creation, is found in that communion with God, gained through the Word and prayer, which is known as Christianity.

Life of the Fifth Day.

"All life from the egg" is a scientific saying, conveying a fact foreshadowed in these æons. The forms which first prevailed on earth were strictly those which are brought forth from the egg, either by the rude fostering of the elements and the sunshine, or direct, brooding care: this

* Gen. i. 20, margin. † Heb. iv. 12; 1 Thess. v. 23.

comprises the finny tribes, the insect swarms, reptiles, and birds. Varying as all these do, in outward form and perfectness, as greatly as the caterpillar from the butterfly, yet at the beginning they all undergo this phase of development. They are briefly summed up, in the record of the fifth day, as the life of the waters, and the life of the air; while one of its chief characteristics is touched on in the phrase, "Multiply abundantly, and fill the seas."* Of the superabundant vitality which marked that time, we may form some idea from the countless numbers which now fill the bayous and lagoons of the tropics.

The Life of the Waters.

This subject, in our present state of knowledge, is involved in much obscurity. These teeming myriads of the sea, who live mainly by the slaughter of their kindred, have been proved to be possessed of intelligence, and obviously have great physical strength. Fishes have been trained to come at a call, and to distinguish the accustomed

* Gen. i. 22.

voice from many others. To this world we have but little clew. The Creator alone can number or guide their hosts; and among themselves, force and cunning seem to govern their movements. In all this, it seems to reflect the life on earth to-day, which is inscrutable as the restless, troubled sea. A mystery to those who have part in it, who are often borne about, aimlessly drifting oft-times with the tide of affairs; servants, rather than monarchs of their outward circumstance.

The Wonders of the Great Deep.

The varied phases of physical form are nowhere more marvelous than in the sea. We see the translucent, rose-tinted cell become in due time the dark, hard-coated shell-fish. Again we see the wide-spread fields of light, pale as moonlight, varying on its dark background of waters, as if the midnight Aurora of the heavens were dancing upon the ocean wave; while here and there glitters, like the vivid electric flash, the light of another variety of the infusoria, to which mainly may be traced these wonders.

In the sunshine, we may watch the fragile jelly-fish, sustaining its delicate life amidst the powerful waves, that, roused in tempest, rend the stout ships, which are perhaps the most carefully planned structures of all man's handiwork, with their elegant outlines borrowed from the tenants of water and of air; yet the massive oak timbers and sinews of steel and iron, so thoroughly united, are swept away by the destroyer as the web of the insect. Meanwhile, safely above these waves of dread, the nautilus floats buoyantly along, cradled on the great deep, which thunders forth the judgment of God.* So, to the children of faith, whatever the danger, wherever it meets them, "these tempests that come shall come to the rescue, and hasten them home."

The Leviathan.

Of the larger inhabitants of the deep, no finer description exists than in the inspired pages, where the puny strength of man is spoken of: —

* Ps. xxxvi. 6.

"Canst thou draw out leviathan with a hook? will he make supplications unto thee? wilt thou play with him as a bird? Shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him? None is so fierce that dare stir him up. His eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. Out of his nostrils goeth smoke; flame goeth out of his mouth. In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow rejoiceth before him; his heart is firm as stone, and hard as the nether millstone. When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid; the sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold. He esteemeth iron as straw; the arrow cannot make him flee; darts are counted as stubble; he laugheth at the shaking of a spear. He maketh the deep to boil like a pot; he maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary. Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear. He beholdeth all high things; he is king over all the children of pride." *

Even to the careless observer, the varied tribes of animal life illustrate many of the traits of human life as we see it daily; and that this is not a

* Job xli. (See margin.)

mere chance, but a part of God's thought in such life, we learn from the analogies written out for us in the volume of God's Book.

From out the purblind, restless sea of the world's life, swayed by outward tide of circumstance, have arisen, from time to time, monarchs of might, who have swept over the world as a wave of destruction; while the nations bowed in terror before the wonderful might of the "king of pride." So in times past have the kings of the earth been pre-eminently the destroyers of their own race, and their power exercised in direct contrast and opposition to the Word and power of God, whose strength is wielded to "bless, and heal, and to make alive." So, in the great leviathan, the dragon of the deep, is portrayed these kings of the earth, far back as in the time of Pharaoh, whose power was subdued by God, who, as King of old,* was manifest, working salvation in the midst of the earth; for Thou didst divide the sea by strength; Thou brakest the heads of the dragon in the waters, and gavest leviathan to be meat to the

* Ps. lxxiv. 12, 14.

people inhabiting the wilderness; for thus saith Jehovah: "Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his river."* And the haughty Pharaoh, who had hardened his heart to the Word of God, stands as a type of the powers of pride that have from time to time held such sway over the world, as would serve to make their sudden destruction the more memorable, when they fall before the touch of Jehovah, whose Word had said, "Who hath prevented that I should repay him?"†

Even in the slighter touches, we learn the insight and exactness of the Word: as it speaks of smiting the head of these powers of the sea, we are reminded of the literal fact, that, in the great serpent tribes, a comparatively slight blow, directly on the head, will put an end to life. So this phrase would not only tell us of the swift and utter destruction of the kings of pride, but also that He who directs the blow to fall was the One in whose sight are open the sources of all forms of life;‡

* Ezek. xxix. 3. † Job xli. 11; Rom. xi. 33, 36.
‡ Heb. iv. 13.

and beyond this, it shows us that as the Word passes through the nations in swift judgment, dividing them unto life or death, the stroke that comes, though inevitable to the criminal, falls in the most direct, and therefore merciful manner; and yet in that way which may most impress the beholder, and so call him home to the Word and Life with God.

From time to time, in the dim history of the past, we find, rising from the sea of life which filled the world, these kings of might, who seek to immortalize themselves by the cities they have builded, in which the children of pride could emulate one another in luxury and selfism — those cities which from the first preyed ruthlessly on the life of the myriad serfs who labored on them, and which absorbed in their great tide of life, without a ripple of consciousness, the thousands of the weaker sort.

Cain is the first city-builder on record. His descendants were famed for intelligence and skill, and were of marked intellectual power. The cities, even of our own time, seem to bear the

mark of Cain, as their swarming myriads, unknown and unnumbered as the fishes of the sea, die out daily in silence; the weaker are thrust to the wall, simply to swell the triumph of some prince among these children of pride, whose life echoes, in cold audacity to God and man, the question of their ancestor: "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Several of the sea-side cities have been, from various causes, marked examples of the history of the power of pride, and the fate of sudden desolation, written out beforehand in the Word of God, by which all life is judged.* In some of the most exquisite sentences ever penned in modern tongue, Ruskin speaks of those thrones of mark which, "since the dominion of man was asserted over ocean, have been set upon its sands. Of the throne of Tyre, only the memory remains; of Venice, the ruin: and those who inherit their greatness, if they forget their example, may be led through prouder eminence to less pitied destruction.

"The exaltation, the sin, the punishment of

* Gen. iv. 17–22; John xii. 48.

Tyre, have been recorded for us in perhaps the most touching words ever uttered by the prophets of Israel against the cities of the stranger;* but we read them as a lovely song, and close our ears to the sternness of their warning; for the very depth of the fall of Tyre has blinded us to its reality, and we forget, as we watch the bleaching of the rocks between the sunshine and the sea, that they were once as an 'Eden, the garden of God.'

"Her successor, like her in perfection of beauty, though less in endurance of dominion, is still left for our beholding in the final period of her decline — a ghost upon the sands of the sea. . . . So weak, so quiet, so bereft of all but her loveliness, that we might well doubt, as we watch her faint reflection in the mirage of the lagoon, which was the city, and which the shadow.

"I would fain endeavor to trace the lines of this image, before it is forever lost, to record, as far as I may, the warning which seems to me to be uttered by every one of the fast gaining waves

* Ezek. xxvi., xxvii., xxviii.

that beat like passing bells against the stones of Venice."

As the earlier phases of creation are repeated in certain of the physical forms of earth to-day, speaking to us of the unchangeable Creator, who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever;" so also the fate of the kings of pride is the same now as of old, and this fate is decreed by the same Judge, who is now everywhere present, working salvation in our midst by dividing the good from the evil, the living from the dead. As the fate of the king of pride, so is that of "his children," or of those in allegiance with him. They are the "servants of earth,"* as Cain was of old. Their dying life is dedicated to some form of self-seeking, — it may be even the things of beauty or mere enjoyment, or it may be the greed of gain, — whether of intellectual wealth and culture or mere palpable possessions.

With the successors of those who are strong in this sea of life, comes the gairish bloom of pride, gaudy and lurid, yet not without its charm for the

* Literal translation. (Gen. iv. 2.)

many. Seen in the eternal light, it is like the rude barbaric splendor of the painted savage, who, perfect in beauty, and strong as he is in his own eyes, vanishes into nothingness before the development of civilization.

The Word, which has judged pride and its belongings, shows us its inherent ugliness in naming as the chief of those things which are an abomination to Jehovah, our King, a proud look,* and its reward, desolation.

But the children of life and light are those who seek first the kingdom of God. The Word recognizes no divided service. God has sent forth to us the King, who can save now and forever. Shall we echo with the rabble, those "servants of earth," "We will not have this man to reign over us; we have no king but Cæsar," — that is, the world's king of the world's ways of pride; — or shall we in all humility receive the Crucified, saying to both heart and mind, "Behold your King"?

Entering into this allegiance, we may be led by the Spirit so to follow the standard of the cross

* Prov. vi. 17.

(which is that of Christendom and its enlightenment), that we may enter the presence of the ascended Saviour, and learn to behold Him enthroned with "all power over earth and heaven;" so that not only we may trust as a child our future to Him, but *receive now* that mighty salvation, working, with its supernatural power of blessing, in our daily lives; fulfilling in them the promises of God.

The Life of the Air.

Close upon the age of sunshine, and in beautiful harmony with the laws of Nature, came the birds, as highest type of the prevailing life of that time. Even now, in mere physical point of view, their beauty and high organization may be expressed in one word — perfection. Their life seems to blend with the sunshine. Their song is first herald of the dawn; before the busy hum of life stirs in the city streets, this has sounded, from East to West, across wide continents of life. Around each little hamlet, the hymn of praise, from these feathered choristers, ascends clear and bright, until it seems to reach the gates of heaven. Again,

tender and full, the inarticulate melody springs forth in a fountain of loving joy, as thus cheering their kindred, they begin the arduous, yet glad task of ministering to their little households.

So this fifth age is the æon of creation's spring-time. "Lo! the winter is past; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing birds is come; the voice of the turtle is heard in our land! O my Dove, which is in the clefts of the rocks, let me hear thy voice (for it is sweet) until the day break and the shadows flee."

The spring-time has come to the world! The time of the birds! their free, glad life shows them to be quickened with the light and warmth of heaven. They are heralds of the sunshine when the tempest and darkness are over; heralds also of the resurrection hour of spring, with its newness of life, when the isolation of winter has passed away.

We may not treat carelessly the thoughts God sends us by these winged messengers as they rise far above the earth-bound life we have lately watched, far removed, yet one with it; and as time

passes, even these tribes of the air become servants of man. The facts and thoughts of the visible creation seem woven together in a seamless tapestry, forming a mantle of vital service for the King, — a glorious preparation for the coming of the Highest!

At this spring-time of creation, the fountain of animate life comes forth, and everywhere may be seen the wonderfully varied expressions of vitality. Finally the highest forms become engrafted on those already known. So, in later times, the soul-life of man crowns the physical possibilities of earthly existence, leading it heavenward.

From the stand-point of to-day we look back. Between us and those dim æons of the past extend many centuries of this soul-life, imprisoned in frail earthly tenements, waiting to be clothed upon with immortality. Above the turmoil of those ages, rises the sure word of prophecy, cheering as the winged messengers of light: "Turn you to the strong-hold, ye prisoners of hope! Behold, thy King cometh! meek and lowly. He shall speak peace. His dominion shall be from sea to

sea — even to the ends of the earth." For the coming of this King, the wide earth is arrayed with its wealth of life and bloom. From the beginning are written out by the hand of God messages to the waiting soul of man. While to all this hieroglyph of God's love, the Word is the key.

In that we are taught of the æon of light, which was the age of dawn. Its covenant of day and night was a sign of the unchangeable, eternal covenant which God seeks to establish with each soul.* In the later æons of the spring, with its gladness, we are led a step nearer the heart of God, as the mystery of the life-blood of the covenant † is prophesied, where infinite wisdom and power pause in the onward, stately march of creation, making it a distinct era, when we first have to do with this higher organism, with its heart-beat quickened by the .

Scarlet Life-Tide.

"For the life is the blood." We look back through the centuries which the revelation of God

* Jer. xxxiii. 21, 25. † Heb. xiii. 20.

mirrors to our view, and behold the presence of God with the Father of the Faithful. The sacred covenant is founded; visible signs are given to test obedience, and to quicken faith; the offerings are prepared; the turtle dove and pigeon are laid on the altar. *The vision ends in darkness.**

Later in time the law is given to the Israel of God. The sin offering and burnt offering are commanded; the turtle dove is the accepted sacrifice of the poor.† Thus the herald of spring — that joyous resurrection hour of nature — becomes associated with the sin and suffering of humanity. As the life-tide flows on the altar, the stain of uncleanness, the pain of separation, even the indwelling plague of leprosy, are purified and done away. Strange way of redemption or remission for the weary and heavy-laden child of man! Strange service of obedience to which these people were called!

In the temple, as the altar fires grow dim, we behold the mother and babe of Bethlehem, with the burnt offering of the poor. The devout

* Gen. xv. † Lev. v. 7, 11.

Simeon is waiting for the consolation of Israel. Quickened by the Spirit, he recognizes the child Jesus as "the Lord's Christ," and giving thanks, he said, "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation!" — The spring-time of the soul's life is at hand.

Again we look in the mirror of life which God Himself holds out to us. Beneath the darkened heavens we behold the cross! The sacred life-tide flows, in answer to the fierce outcry of the mob and its leaders, who professed to keep and teach the Word of God. The Gentile ruler, half in scorn, and half in pity for their "faultless" Victim, has said, "Behold your King!" while the armed retainers put on Him the scarlet robe of mockery, and then led forth to a felon's death the one only sinless *Son of man.*

It is at the cross that we begin to learn something of the meaning of the words, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me;" the prophecy spoken to us by the *Son of God.*

The voice of pity, and the sorrow of the helpless,

seem drowned in the world's fierce tumult and the clamor of Babel-tongued philosophy, as, in seeking to trample on the power of Christ the Crucified, they cry, with one accord, "His blood be upon us and our children!" *History gives the dread fulfillment.*

Thick darkness soon enshrouds the life of captive Judea, — a night of gloom and desperate sorrow, — and "blood is poured out as dust."* The helpless people question their prophets: "Watchmen, tell us of the night." The inspired seer gazes through the gloom: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments, traveling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

"Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel? I have trodden the wine-press alone. The year of my redeemed is come. I looked, and there was none to help. I wondered there was none to uphold; therefore mine arm brought salvation." "So He was their Saviour."

With herald note of gladness and good news

* Zeph. i. 17.

comes this triumphant prophecy of the Redeemer, mighty to save now in this present world.

We look from the Crucified to the opened heavens, and behold the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, with vesture* dipped in blood. The scarlet robe of mockery has become the royal robe of the Conqueror. The seamless garment of humanity, worn in our service and dyed with life-blood, makes manifest how the divine life is engrafted on the earthly through this "New Testament" or covenant of our King.

Still the sure word of prophecy reads, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints;" the heavens are bowed as its hosts descend in homage to the King. No longer the pitiless mob, surging through the city streets, to pour contempt on the helpless Son of man; but "multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision," and the waiting earth is swayed with fear and hope, for "they shall look on Him whom they pierced." †

"Is it nothing to you, all ye who pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto

* Rev. xix. 13. † Zech. xii. 10; Rev. i. 7.

my sorrow."* — Our world's life still passes carelessly by, as it did at Calvary, absorbed in its own aims and cares, its own unrest and sorrows, though "Christ our Life" has come to it. "Behold and see" the King of the soul's life. The spring-time of each soul is when Christ is clearly manifest to it; for then its life must bloom with the fulfilled promises of God.

"Is it nothing to you, all ye who pass by?" Behold thy King! yet the soul's life chafes on restlessly in its earthly prison-house. "Would I had the wings of a dove; I would flee away, and be at rest. I would wander far off. I would hasten my escape from the storm and tempest."† "But the Lord shall utter His voice; the Lord shall be the hope of His people." Whatever may threaten, the refuge is near; "turn you to the strong-hold." Listen to the voice of the One who speaks "in righteousness, mighty to save." Is the winter of sorrow, with isolation, around you? Never more alone, for to you the Voice has said, "Lo, I am with you alway."

* Lam. i. 12. † Ps. lv. 6.

Are you in the mists of uncertainty? the night of unbelief? the unrest of care? "Come unto Me, and I will *give* you rest." Is the dread captivity of sin within you, or around you as a whirlwind, uprooting all cherished realities? Whatever the tempest, the word of Christ is mighty to save, speaking peace. Even *peace through the blood of the cross.**

The life-tide of Calvary has become the river of salvation, bearing home the myriad redeemed † as a mighty sea of glory and life, leading from earth to heaven. ‡

The way is made manifest by which Jehovah would lead His people, bringing them home to Himself; § bearing them up as the eagle bears its helpless young on its powerful wings, keeping them safe from harm. Christ our Life stands revealed as the Strong-hold of Hope, the Rock of Ages, to which the soul, winged by the promises of the Word, will flee as a bird to the mountain.

Among the tribes of life there is perhaps no

* Col. i. 20. † Rev. v. 9, 11. ‡ Eph. ii. 13.
§ Ex. xix. 4; Deut. xxxii. 11.

finer sight than the upward flight of the eagle, its sight undimmed by the full power of the sunshine. It mounts slowly, circling upward until lost to sight in the heavens. It is a perfect expression of majesty and vital strength. It is written of the children of Light, who look at the Saviour's power rather than the difficulties that would hedge them in, that they shall not be weary; they shall "mount as on eagles' wings;"* while He who redeems their life will renew their youth (vigor) like the eagle's.†

From afar the eagle discerns some object of its search, and sweeps down to earth with swift, unerring aim; so we read, "As birds flying" will the Lord defend‡ His little ones.

From the varied analogies of His love and power by which the Creator of all fixes our attention on these tribes of life, we may learn how tenderly He watches over even the least forms of life, and be quickened to cast all our care on Him who seeks to perfect and to save to the uttermost.

* Is. xl. 31. † Ps. liii. 4, 5. ‡ Is. xxxi. 5.

We gather something of the power of the Word which called into being this life of the air as we watch its varied existence in our present world. The flight of birds is a marvelous expression of vital power, not only from its swiftness,* but that wonderful, unnamed faculty which enables them, as they speed from pole to tropic, to wing their way, straight as an arrow from the bow, to the rock or tree which had been their former home. Thus the winter wren † passes on its solitary way from Labrador to Florida; while the least petrel, whose home seems to be the tempest-wave, traverses thousands of miles of ocean to reach its chosen rock! The very abundance of this life, as noted in the fifth æon, is absolutely startling, whether we look at the rocks of mid-ocean, or the inland forests, where the passenger pigeon migrates. ‡

* "The speed of one mile, and in some cases two miles a minute is thought to be attained." — AUDUBON, vol. vi. p. 242.

† This tiny bird weighs about four and a half drachms; while the least petrel has the same weight and thirteen and a half inches expanse of wing!

‡ From those rocky islands *whole fleets* of small vessels are laden each season with eggs of the sea-birds; while, in illustration of the

Passing through the forest wilderness, as it is called, such a variety of these tribes of air appear, that, Columbus-like, one seems to have discovered a new world of life; while the high arches extend mile after mile, upholding this mid-air territory, in which each tree is a palace, or in some cases, it would seem, a well-peopled city.

These facts and pictures of bird-life now illustrate the fifth æon, because the general type is the same; the same thoughts of sunshine and freedom are associated with it; while that of the sea has the same inferior type, combined with great power, craft, and ferocity. These two great forms of life from the common origin of the egg, yet growing up into such different atmospheres, differ in one way: As we look back, the type of the life of the

forest life, we take a part of Audubon's account of one of these migrations: "For fifty-five miles the numbers were undiminished, and continued so for three days. Where they had alighted at night, I observed many trees, two feet in diameter, broken off near the ground. The whole forest seemed as if swept by a tornado. As they approached, their flight sounded at times like thunder: it was useless to speak to, or even shout to persons nearest me. Even the reports of the gun were seldom heard. Facts show that their flight may be rated at a mile a minute!"

air has constantly developed from good to very good; while the life of the waters is now comparatively degenerate from the mighty "saurians" of old. Some of those monarchs of the flood have been disinterred from their rocky sepulchres, grander than the pyramid tombs of Pharaoh. Their elaborate structure, even to the eye, is preserved for our instruction. The degenerate tribes of our time have similar predatory habits, but not that special elaboration which distinguished those monarchs of the world's early life.

Still the type can be distinctly recognized. From the life of our world to-day we can read that of its remotest ancestors; while the past distinctly as eloquently prophesies the future, and each form of development, each phase of life, is full of suggestion, yet we see the literalness of the Word as each one is seen always positively "after its kind." These forms no more develop or become merged in one another under the touch of time, which obliterates so many distinctions, than the contortions of the brown tree-root in the forest, which clings around the rock, or creeps along the

soil, can become, from present circumstances or future development, the snake it so vividly and unmistakably suggests. The record of the past enunciates the history and laws of life as plainly as the tablets of Sinai.

Beyond all the multitude of thoughts of the wisdom and power shown in this creation, and the loving care and presence which sustain it, stands forth the twofold life which God Himself calls us to consider; one form of which pictures the ordinary life of the world — its strength, its vagueness, and its constant drifting on toward the unknown boundary line, —

> "With never a thought o'er that boundary flying,
> Never a grasp as the clouds swing by;"

while the other pictures the possibilities of the children of Light, even in this world, as they seek, through "faith in Christ," to know the power of His resurrection working in them.* To know this is to be risen with Christ above the pressure of earthly cares, and to be no more servants of earth,

* Phil. iii. 9, 10.

but led by the Spirit, and fed by the Word, to have the power of the ascended Saviour always so present with us that the promises of Christ are fulfilled in our daily life; and this is perfected service.

Whatever the circumstances around us, "our life" and all life is "hidden with Christ in God;" and He therefore can guide its possibilities. The contrast of these tribes of air and ocean is not so much the obvious one of those who are Christians and those who are not, but as we watch the life of one type always developing from good to very good, while in the other it as constantly degenerates and sinks below the level of its first possibilities, we cannot but feel that the appeal is to those who call themselves Christians, yet suffer themselves to drift with the tide of events, whether the local current be amusement or care. So that in this world God only knows whether they are thoroughly of it or not, since their life assimilates itself so closely with the life of those who know not the power of faith in the Word, and the ascended Saviour it declares to us: while of the

half-hearted allegiance, whose drifting darkness is like "the troubled sea, which cannot rest," leaving to the future all efficient power of the life of faith, as it fails and falters in the possibilities of each day, the heart which knoweth the bitterness of such turbid unrest can alone say how great is its darkness.

Let us, with practical faith, receive the power of "Christ our Life" working in and with us with present might of that salvation which is safety and healing; fulfilling in us the unchangeable promise made to all who will take God at His word: "I will bless thee, and make thee a blessing." This is to become "children of Light," and to be in active allegiance to the kingdom of heaven (so near, as the Saviour tells us), which endures through time and eternity. With a single eye or sincere purpose to receive this eternal light now, that it may so shine through our daily lives that men may glorify God,

how great will be the fullness
of light and life-power
filling the soul!

DAY OR AGE (ÆON) SIXTH.

GEN. i. 24–31.

LIFE ON EARTH;

OR,

"Emmanuel, God with us."

God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. Ps. lxxiv. 12.

Through the tender mercies of our God, whereby the Day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness. LUKE i. 78, 79.

EMMANUEL, GOD WITH US.

(Matt. i. 23; Is. vii. 14.)

"Behold, the Lord God will come, and His arm shall rule for Him. He shall feed His flock like a shepherd." (Is. xl. 10, 11.)

"I am the Good Shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." (John x. 11.)

WE have watched the life of the air and the life of the waters, with their hosts unnumbered as the sands of the sea-shore, and now the word of the Good Shepherd calls into being the tribes of earth, thus perfecting the wide circle of life; and we behold the "powerful Word" upholding all this varied existence.*

"Thousands of millions" † hear the Voice, and live. These mighty tribes prevail for a time, while this temple of life awaits its King. To this phase

* Heb. i. 2. † Gen. xxiv. 60.

of things God gives the sacredness of a special creation. As science opens for us the rocky tombs of these past generations, we can readily picture the huge mastodon, and those kindred forms, which reigned in the forests primeval. We may realize something of the fullness of delight which then filled the earth as we now see the wild goat bounding on the "high hills which are their refuge." The range of the mountains where the creatures play form their pasture — their "heritage" forever from God.* While these tribes of earth rejoice in the gift of life, through all their joy and gladness comes the harsh discord of pain, and we cannot but marvel as we see that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," and learn to touch, and think with tenderness of all this wealth of life which, ruling for a while on earth, is now joined with ours in the mystery of suffering; and which was created by the same Word of power which comes to each soul to-day, seeking to recreate in it the lost likeness of its Maker.

* Job xl. 20.

These animal tribes are included in that great covenant which was established for "perpetual generations."* They are specially named when God points out the rainbow as a pledge or sign of promise that the wave of destruction should never more, while time lasts, desolate the earth; so that from the very beginning of our present age of life, far back as the human race can be traced, we are reminded of the positive claim these dumb kindred of ours have on our thought and kindness, since God has chosen the most glorious symbol in Nature, as an eloquent, though a mute appeal that we should care for these who suffer with us, serve us unto death, and who are a gift from Him for our manifold blessing and delight.

The record reads thus: "The bow shall be in the cloud. I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth."† The light of heaven, resting on the storm-cloud of earth, becomes the rainbow of hope, the visible "token" to man of God's special provi-

* Gen. ix. 12, 14. † Gen. ix. 16.

dence and presence in all earthly things. Man also will "look upon it, and remember," not the unknown God afar off, but near at hand, mighty to save and help — a shield forever between us and all that might desolate.

As this covenant of special Providence is declared, we are reminded of those lower tribes, our dependents; so our care and tenderness in these so-called least things, may be a sort of test of what our stewardship will be in more sacred interests and responsibilities.

He liveth best who loveth best, all things, both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us, He made and loveth all.

In the sight of God, we are taught* that one test of a righteous man is, that he has regard for the life of his beast, while even the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. In the Sermon on the Mount, the parallel to the golden rule of life is given in these words: "With the measure that ye mete, it shall be measured to you again;" and it

* Prov. xii. 10.

surely will be no palliation of an offence in the sight of the Judge over all, who is also the Creator of all, that the creature we have left uncared for, or have tormented, was dumb and helpless, and in our eyes insignificant. We cannot impress our minds too vividly with the fact, so often taught in the Word, that nothing is insignificant to the God who looked on each creation of life, and "saw that it was good."

The tenderness of the God of Nature is everywhere seen, whether we look at the homes provided, or the special resources adapted with care to each after its kind. The God of Revelation may be known as the God of Nature, as we find in His Word the gift of the Sabbath not only to man, but to all those creatures who have fallen directly under his dominion. Not only in the rest of the seventh day are they specially included by law, but in the Sabbath of years, all the "beasts of the field" are remembered in its blessing.* These marked statutes, together with various secondary laws, such as, "Thou shalt not muzzle the

* Ex. xxiii. 1.

ox that treadeth out the corn," served as a constant check on human aggression, and formed one of the distinguishing features that served to separate the mass of mankind from the people of God.

In historic record we are again reminded of this communion of life and suffering, awaiting redemption from God,* as we read the decree from Mount Sinai: "Whosoever toucheth the mount shall be put to death; not a hand shall touch it, but he shall surely be shot through, whether it be beast or man." This and other commands, suggesting that as the creature life is involved in our misery, and shares with us the burden of sickness and daily toil, so it must also benefit vastly by that redemption which touches our highest interests, yet must inevitably include and react upon even the least and most lowly.

Again and again all this is recalled in Holy Writ, as at Nineveh, when the Word of God came, saying, "In forty days it shall be overthrown;"† and the "king arose from his throne, and proclaimed the decree through the city, Let

* Rom. viii. 22, 23. † Jonah iii. 4.

neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, feed or drink water; but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth. And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil ways; and God accepted their repentance. And the word came, saying, Should not I spare Nineveh, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left, and also much cattle?" In contrast to the penitence of the king of "Nineveh, that great city," we find, some six centuries earlier, the word of warning sent to a king of power, but no repentance follows; and 'at midnight the first-born of Egypt are smitten, from the royal palace of Pharaoh to the dungeon, and the first-born of the cattle; while the Israel of God, and all that cleaved to them, had perfect safety.'

From that time all the first-born were hallowed unto God.* On that day of redemption was founded the law making the first-born of all life sacred to the direct service of the sanctuary, or else "redeemed with a price."† All of this forms

* Numb. iii. 13. † Ex. xiii. 2; Deut. xvi. 19.

another link which associated that Passover night of Egypt with the First-born of the royal line of Judah, who is spoken of by the apostle as the First-born of every creature, "for by Him were all things created."* He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. "Also the first-born from the dead, that in all things He might have pre-eminence," and the first-born among many brethren, or of those conformed to His image or likeness.†

"God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;" and thus the tribes of earth receive their king, formed "to have dominion." Whatever the essential elements were by which primeval man imaged forth the likeness of the Godhead, they are not revealed but after many years of life beyond the paradise of God, and divided from the full communion with the Presence, which enabled Him to mirror forth that Nature to the life around; the finite reflecting the infinite as the mirror the heavens, or the dew-drop the sunshine. When all this was in the past, a memory bright with prophecy of a possible future, unto Adam,

* Col. i. 15–18. † Rom. viii. 29; Rev. i. 5.

alienated from the Word, estranged from the nature and presence of God, there is born a son; not in that early glorious likeness, but after his own image.* This distinction we find carefully made in the fifth chapter of Genesis, where also is preserved the slender thread or outline of the race which links ours with the earlier world, given us in the names of those memorable men who lived when years were as days. Taken together in their direct succession, these form a legend or parable from God to those who come after, saying, as we render the strange sounds into our familiar tongue, Man, fixed or appointed in misery deplorable, the blessed God shall come down, teaching that the grave will yield to the weeper rest.†

This, then, is the only word we have from those centuries leading back from the destruction of the flood, which overwhelmed the disobedient, to the gates of Eden. Above the dark, swift-flowing river of time, rise these words of light, spanning it with the rainbow of God's promise.

* Gen. v. 13.

† Adam — Man: Seth — Fixed or appointed: Noah — Comfort or peace. (Gen. v. 29.)

In fullness of time prophecy and promise are realized, as "Emmanuel, God with us," dwells on earth, and talks with man as friend to friend, saying, "I am the resurrection and the life."

They who listen to that Voice before whose power the grave shall yield its dead, and seek to follow where it leads, will be made partakers of that resurrection power of the ascended Saviour, and death itself become but an episode in life, a mere shadow, flitting, like a passing cloud, across the brightness of their eternity. To the Christian, with soul in allegiance to the King of Life, it is only the herald of the resurrection morning, with its perfect peace.

To those in allegiance to the things of earth, or preoccupied with them, these words of the Saviour come with a tone of warning, reminding them that death is but a servant of life, and can have no power to make any real change in us. Whatever may have been our aim, if the world's ways have held or guided our thoughts, then, as the sleep of unconsciousness passes away, we awaken bewildered, lost in the mazes of eternity, to

which we have no clew, because we have never sought it.

For life here, and its progress beyond the grave, there is for all one Guide and Leader, who has come forth to meet us in our daily life, even Emmanuel, "God with us;" and it is in our daily life that we must receive Him, making His presence an essential element of that life. Allegiance to Him to-day and here is life with Him hereafter, and safety for the life that now is, as well as that which is to come. He, who above all others has spoken to the heart and mind of man, has shown us that to His disciple death is no violence to life, no awful accident, but a halting-place in the onward march, marking our near approach to and possession of that land of promise and prophecy which is the paradise of God.

But the Emmanuel is the likeness of the glory of God, the express image of the Godhead, or exact expression of that nature; and we, "beholding as in a glass, are changed into the same image from glory to glory;" therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, and all things become new.

"Marvel not I say unto you, Ye must be born again."

Allegiance to Christ thus becomes the new and living way by which the lost likeness is regenerated or re-created in the soul; so that, quickened by the Spirit, it is made a child of God, and feels the child-like faith, which trusts utterly the Word, sent from "our Father in heaven," with its direct message of love. Christ came to His own, and His own received Him not, but as many as received Him, to them gave He "power to become the sons of God."

As man, the appointed king of this world's life, is formed from the dust of the earth he reigns over, the divine blessing is breathed into his life, and "body, soul, and spirit" are quickened with the presence and communion of God. In this complex, threefold nature he reflects the likeness of his Maker; but it is a short-lived glory that abides with him, fleeting as the hours of paradise. The spiritual life dies out in man as he fails in allegiance to the Word; and now, in our daily lives, we bear the image of the earthy, as we speak

in common phrase of soul and body, with their twofold worlds, as together forming the unit or sum of our life; in this phrase tracing out the likeness of our ancestor,* who was born in the image of the Adam, who had wandered far from the possibilities and power of the spiritual life.

In the earlier tongues, image and idea blend in one thought. Across the apathy that haunts our soul-life as a death-sleep, comes, as a vision, the idea of a real life, with something of eternal power working in it, which likens it to its Creator, and fills it with thoughts and realities of the God, its Maker, who gives songs of praise and triumph in the night of time. And the Word comes, saying, "Awake, thou that sleepest; arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light;" for God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give us the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. We are urged to "put on the new man," which is renewed after the image of Him that created;† being thus born again into the new-

* Seth. (Gen. v. 3, 6, 8.) † Col. iii. 10.

ness of the spirit-life, we can again trace out our kinship with the triune nature of the God of Revelation, and in the spirit of adoption or sonship commune with the Deity, whom we slowly learn to worship in spirit and in truth.

And so it is written, 'the first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam a quickening spirit: the first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven; howbeit, that was not first which was spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast.' Thus we see that the spirit of allegiance to the "truth as it is in Jesus," is that spirit of adoption or kinship with God which crowns us with resurrection power, not merely over death in the future, but it is that which brings present victory over all things that oppress or wear upon us.

To the world, sunk in apathy and darkness to

all these things of the Spirit, comes the light of life, and the "light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not;" for the god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. "As cold water to the thirsty soul, and good news from a far country," came the light of this gospel of Christ, with its glad tidings of the kingdom of heaven near at hand. To enter this kingdom requires simply allegiance to its King — "Emmanuel, God with us, mighty to save." The word of Jesus comes to the disciples, "Verily, I say unto you, ye who have followed Me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, shall also reign with Me."* Of the day and hour in which this regeneration comes, no man knoweth. Perchance beyond the shore of time will be the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; but chief token and glory of that time will be that the Saviour is King.

* Rom. i. 6, 9; Rev. v. 10, xxii. 5; 2 Tim. ii. 12; Matt. xix. 28; Rom. v. 17.

So, with each soul, the hour of its regeneration, when all things shall become new or quickened, will be when Jesus is enthroned in the heart as King, and the glory of the Presence overshadows the natural selfism, and abides in the life, filling it with the new and heavenly atmosphere of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, and faith.

Let us press to the prize of this high calling in Christ, each soul learning practically for itself that to be awakened or quickened into this likeness is to be satisfied! Meanwhile, to-day, if we give heed to His voice, we may enter into His rest, which is glorious; making us not only companions of Jesus in the kingdom and word of patience,* but partakers of His resurrection power and life.†

"*I am the Good Shepherd.*"

"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He restoreth my soul." (Ps. xxiii. 1, 3.)

"Now the God of all peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." (Heb. xiii. 20.)

* Rev. i. 9; iii. 10. † Acts xvii. 18; Phil. iii. 10; John v. 24, 25.

"When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." (1 Peter v. 4.)

As the tribes of life appear before us, we recognize the love of the Good Shepherd. Each day the daily bread is given to them, as He upholds all things by His powerful word; but all forms of life must be sustained, not only by the visible earthly nutriment given for each "after its kind," but the invisible life, which thinks, plans, and wills, must be fed after its more subtle sort; and we are reminded that the invisible and visible, or the heavenly and earthly, form one life, as we see, throughout the realms of Nature, untold wealth of sustenance for the soul's earnest power of research; while the gift to man of the birds of the air and the flowers of the field may teach us how precious are those finer attributes of our nature in the sight of our Maker; but beyond all power of beauty or knowledge to soothe, comes the restlessness which prompts man to seek out many inventions, each surpassing the other in ability. This by some is called progress; but it only seems to feed the fever heat of life, marked with the evil symptoms of

apathy to that higher life with God, to grow in which is true progress, real development, in every faculty of our threefold nature. The fever and apathy alike cause us to leave unheeded the voice of the Good Shepherd, calling home the straying flock to that fold of God, which is the kingdom of heaven, so near each one of us, though unseen; and of its world is naught more wondrous told us than these few words: "I shall be satisfied."

So in the Word, which is the bread of life from heaven, the highest cravings of our nature will find sustenance, while we restlessly strive to still their hunger with the amusements of the hour, or mere intellectual food. All of these have their place; each may be good after its kind; but it is as vain to offer them for the spirit's need and development as to give the child a stone when it asks bread. There is no lesson man seems to learn more slowly in the school of life than this: that spiritual things must be spiritually discerned. It is mockery to offer the jewel of science, which is the most perfect expression of intellectual truth, or the glitter of entertainment, however refined, to

satisfy the soul that yearns for the supernatural power and blessing of a life of faith with God.

In spite of our wanderings, the Good Shepherd is not weary, but still seeks us; and though we, like sheep, have gone astray, let us now return to the Great Shepherd of our souls.* It is a study of interest to watch, in the lower tribes of life, the traits so common in our own, and see how affection and generosity, pride and self-interest, or the good and evil of ordinary life, are reflected there in very human guise. So much so is this the case, that from those tribes of creatures most familiar to the eye are drawn many of the Scripture illustrations. In the flock of sheep, it is often seen how they will follow blindly where one of their number wills to lead; this is constantly repeated in every-day life, where one strong will sways a multitude, or where some time-honored custom is tenaciously adhered to in spite of the obvious fact that the reality it represented is a thing of the past. So the life of the world vibrates from the demagogues of the present to the effete rules of

* 1 Peter iii. 25.

the past; but through all this strife, uncertainty, and fearful drifting, comes the voice of the Word of God to teach and to lead each soul. "For the Lord is our God; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture." In all the wide field of the world's life, God teaches us to distinguish those who are His by this simple token of the Good Shepherd and His flock: "The sheep hear His voice, and they follow Him, *for* they know His voice; and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd."

So, wherever we turn, we hear the same glad tidings, that this allegiance to Christ will solve all the problems and perplexities of the life that now is and that which is to come. If we hear and follow that voice, faith, which is the practical working power for good in the world's life to-day, will abound in our lives, making them rejoice and blossom as a rose. "For faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." So we are again taught that man in the image of his Maker, or, in other words, the child of faith,

is to have dominion over the tribes of life, and the troubles of life, through the power of the Word.

Day One.

The first hours of creation have taught us that "in the beginning was the Word," and that in the Word was the power of God, and from the Word came forth life and light to man. Of the power and progress of daily life with this Word, we may gather something from these days of the visible creation.

In the beginning the earth was without form, and void; the Word enters, and there is light. So, with the soul's life, the Word comes to its chaos and aimless unrest, and though the light shineth in the darkness that comprehends it not, yet the tempests are stilled, and with those who have the will or wish to receive it, the work of re-creation or redemption begins.

Day Second.

Another era in the life of faith is formed when the soul realizes that the Word reveals the way

of access to One who can help and heal effectually, and who is always present in our daily life to lead and bless; and thus the thought of communion and prayer springs up, lifting from the weary and heavy-laden the cares of earthly life.

Day Third.

In the third day the mountains become clearly defined, rising slowly above the dead level of the waters. So in the soul it is like a new and grand creation when the Rock of Ages rises clearly above the troubled waters of life's sea, as a sure refuge. Gradually it gains in majesty, until, crowned with the clouds, the visible life of earth blends with that of heaven. Meanwhile the Word ceases not in its work, and as time goes on, through hearty obedience, the life that wills to follow where it leads will abound with the bloom and fruitage that have the blessing of God, though He may still be known only afar off.

Day Fourth.

But the Word comes, that we may not worship an unknown God, afar off from our daily life.

Giving heed to the precious words of inspiration, the sure word of prophecy will be fulfilled, and there will dawn on the waiting soul the star of the morning. This, as we have seen, leads to the full light of the "Sun of Righteousness," risen in high heaven, with healing for each soul that seeks its light, even as the sunshine fills the world, and we enter into glad allegiance to our King and Saviour.

Day Fifth.

Even among those who have attained to this stand-point of allegiance or progress in the life of faith, many remain so passive that they seem simply to drift with this world's tide; while others arise into the fullness of its possibility, and become children of light, intent that the promises of the Word be fulfilled in them.

Day Sixth.

While thus blessed with the light working within us, the Word comes again, leading us onward; and we remember that the promise is, that not only we shall be blessed, but also become a blessing to others; and we learn to realize that the faith-

power is of God, and the promises unlimited. We may not rest passively as "babes in Christ," but press forward to the "fullness of our stature." A passive allegiance is little more than theoretical religion, not the reality, filled with the light of life. Holding fearlessly to the Word and its promises, we shall be "changed from glory to glory," until the likeness of our earthliness fades away in the likeness of our Saviour.

Day Seventh.

Pressing to the prize of this high calling, Emmanuel comes as a friend to meet us, and crowns our life with His gift of the Spirit; receiving this from Him, we share not only in the work,* but the rest of God.

These sevenfold phases may be traced in the development of Christian belief, and in the history of the soul's life. It is ours to choose where we will pause on this way of life and blessing, while the Word calls upon us not to linger or lose any of the sweetness and power of this life of faith.

* John xiv. 12.

In looking at the record of the sixth æon, we cannot but notice the marked phrase (v. 26), "Let us make man in our image." The plural, indicated both in verb and pronoun, is the more striking since the Jews were so zealously monotheistic. Many other phrases in the inspired writings suggest the same thought. The force of some of these disappears in our English translation, but a sufficient number remain to excite the inquiry of the earnest and thoughtful concerning that mystery of the nature and being of the Godhead which they shadow forth.*

Christendom and Heathendom unite in the wor-

* One of the names of Deity most frequently found in the Hebrew Scriptures is in the plural form, placed with a verb in the plural, or sometimes in the singular, as in the opening verse of the Bible: God (Elohim) created. All this is sometimes explained by the custom, among comparatively modern kings, of what is called the "style royal," or use of the plural in state papers. We may realize how late was the origin of this by glancing at the edicts of some of those powerful monarchs who became associated with the history of the Jewish race long after the era of the Pentateuch. (1 Kings v. 8, 9 — Tyre; 2 Chron. xxxii. 13 — Assyria; Ezra i. 2 — Persia; Ezra iv. 19, vi. 8, vii. 12, 13; Dan. iv. 2, 4, 6 — Babylon; Dan. vi. 25, 26; Esther viii. 7: Ahasuerus (Xerxes), king of Persia, "which reigned, from India to Ethiopia, over one hundred and seven and twenty provinces" — Esther i. 1. See also Rawlinson's Historical Evidence, lecture v., notes 16 and 83.)

ship of one God, the infinite and eternal. Among the early Romans, no images were allowed in the temples devoted to the service of the one God afar off from them, who represented the abstract unity or entity of the Being of that unknown Deity, — the Great Spirit, — in dim worship of whom, the Greek philosopher and the red Indian of the wild forest meet on common ground.

But St. Paul speaks of the worship of this unknown God as spiritual ignorance, and urges us to draw near the God of revelation. The nature of the Deity must always be a mystery to the finite mind, except so far as God has chosen to reveal Himself. Let us not remain afar off from this loving revelation, in the outermost courts of worship, with the Platonist,* or with the savage, but let it lead us through the mystery of Trinity to the heart of the divine Unity, and to worship the known God in spirit and in truth. Revelation would lead us from the far off to the near —

* "It may be very intellectual, ingenious philosophy, but I have often said that I do not know what to do with a metaphysical God, and that I will have none but the God of the Bible, who is heart to heart with me." (*Life and Letters of B. G. Niebuhr.*)

even to God, willing and waiting to bless, manifest to His people in special Providence and direct answer to prayer. It would lead from the unknown to the known God, who stablishes with man the rainbow covenant of hope that guards against desolation — even "Emmanuel, God with us, mighty to save" whole worlds of life from the sin and evil which so closely beset them.

Let each soul press into closest allegiance to this Saviour and King of Life until the healing Presence abides in the heart, and is so manifest that each soul may say, "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

"God with us, mighty to save." In the sin and suffering around and within, what strength could avail, what power could "save to the uttermost," but "God — even our own God"?

In the uncertainty, and unrest, and vagueness, who can guide but God Himself? Therefore hath the Saviour sent forth the Holy Spirit, *who* will guide, comfort, and teach us to discern.

Like the shekinah of the Presence, which rested in the holy temple, would the presence of "God

with us" rest in our daily lives, quicken us into temples of the Holy Spirit, filling us with faith-power to move the mountains of evil and suffering under which the under world of our human brotherhood is so visibly heavy-laden.

The Godhead take counsel: "Let us make man in our image;" from the dust of the ground the first man, Adam, is formed. The glory of that early life is but a type and far-off prophecy of the perfected life that awaits us, and is possible for us, since the Christ of God has breathed upon our earth-bound life and apprehension, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit."

Like the pillar of cloud and flame leading the desert wanderers, so do the Word of God and Spirit of God come to us as Saviour and Comforter, — leading us home to the Father's house, where there are many mansions, and heart-room for each and all.

DAY OR AGE (ÆON) SEVENTH.

THE HIGHER LIFE;

OR,

Christ our Rest.

Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. MATT. xi. 28.

And His Rest shall be glorious. Is. xi. 10.

CHRIST OUR REST.

THE SABBATH OF THE SOUL.

"And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign to the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and His rest shall be glorious." (Is. xi. 10.)

STEP by step, day by day, the Word has led us from the chaos and unrest of earth to the rest of God and heaven. In the beginning, day one merges or is lost to sight in eternity; so, with this seventh day, the end is not given, but its morning blends in the eternal day of God — the "great I AM," or always-existing. As we ponder the few phrases of the successive æons, we find them heavy-laden with the manifold thoughts of God; but in this the one thought of rest is supreme.

All the hosts of them. (Gen. ii. 1.)

We are living late in time, — so late in the night of the seventh age, that the morning star has dawned, — yet there is constantly found some new phase or province in life unknown before, enabling us to realize the fullness and force of the phrase, "All the hosts of them." The Word of the Good Shepherd, as He leads forth His flock, calls us to consider how the life of earth blends in that of heaven, naming, as of one life, the hosts of both; reminding us that as eternity must include time, so heaven includes earth, and is in it, enfolding it from harm. So that the words which usher in our Saviour's ministry are no mere rhetoric, but a living fact to those who enter into allegiance to this "kingdom of heaven, near at hand."

The shadows of the seventh night are still with us. Although over the soul-life of the world the dawn is breaking, yet the mists of dawn serve to veil and disguise the realities about us, making things appear as they are not; but the dawn must lead to full light. Let us cleave to the Word,

which leads us, day by day, from good to very good, remembering that of development and life-power, "the Word is the seed."*

It is finished.

No more the Word comes with creative power to earth. God rests, or ceases to add from His infinite storehouse of power any new element of life; but from the word that is spoken springs forth the fullness of daily life, in token of the power of that Word that "cannot return void"† or empty to the God from whom it came forth.

"It is finished!" All things essential to earth are present with it. The creative work of God, so far as concerns this world, is ended. All its hosts, with the plant and creature in myriad beauty — all these are but the harvest of the Word, that seed-germ of life and development cast in the early chaos.

God rests! and the wonderful life-harvest, from that far-off time until to-day, is but a sign to us of the power of the engrafted Word. As the

* Luke viii. 11. † Is. lv. 11.

chaos of soul-life arose, and the life of man was seen hedged in with sin and pain, that mystery of iniquity,* the Word of salvation comes forth from God, not creating, but restoring† it in the likeness of God, through its mighty power of safety and healing.

Priest, prophet, and angel ministered the Word to the sin-sick and suffering soul of humanity, when, in fulfillment of "all that the prophets have spoken,"‡ the Christ came forth from the bosom of the Father, setting a final seal of sacredness on their sure life-word, and leading man to rest in the Word and its redemption§ — engrafting this on their daily life, so that it would bring forth the fruitage of heaven. "The Sower came forth to sow" this seed of life in the soul of man, and we see that the "rest of God is man's redemption."

From the cross comes to us the same word which marshaled the hosts of creation: "It is

* 2 Thess. ii. 7. † Re-creation, re-generation. ‡ Luke xxiv. 25.

§ "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;" the work given Me I have finished, for "I came to fulfill."

finished." Even then were fields of soul-life ripe for the "Lord of the harvest." "Lo! in the volume of the Book it is written;" of all that is essential to the soul's health and present development, the seed lies there. To the "measure of the stature of the life it reveals, no human thought can add." The Word of salvation has come to us; with faith quickened to claim this wealth of our inheritance, we may even here on earth and to-day enter into the rest of God,* the paradise of His presence.

Of the soul-harvest we again learn from the record of the prophecy of our future:† "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, the mystery ‡ of God shall be finished;" and as the seventh angel sounded, "there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever." "We give Thee

* Heb. iv. 1, 3. † Rev. x. 7; xi. 15, 17.

‡ Having made known the mystery of His will, that in fullness of time He might gather all things in Christ which are in heaven and on earth (Eph. i. 9); the mystery of Christ now revealed by His apostles, prophets, and the Spirit (Eph. iii. 4; Col. i. 26).

thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come, because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned." This is the song of the harvest home of the world; the seed of this harvest is the Word and its prophecy — the word of our Saviour on the cross, "It is finished."

Long before the "year of the redeemed,"* or "the day of the Lord," is come to the whole world, this kingdom of God, with its perfect redemption, may come to the soul that is in allegiance to the Word. To rest in the word and will of God is to be redeemed, and to have in all our goings out and comings in the promise fulfilled, as it has been for so many centuries, to the children of faith: "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest." Meanwhile, the Lord of the harvest has said, "I judge you not; but the Word I have spoken, that shall judge you at the last day." Let us sow this Word of salvation in our hearts, that the bloom of eternal life may fill it.

* Is. lxi. 2, lxiii. 4; Joel iii. 15; Luke iv. 19.

The Silence of Rest.

The creative Word is silent; yet its presence lives among us as the successive seed-time and harvest show us its might and echo its praise. The storms of chaos are still as silent before its power as when man entered on that probation life for which God prepared the earth to be inhabited, forming the school of humanity in which is fashioned or chosen the life to come. We are born here in circumstances over which we have no control, our little day called life being given to choose our place for eternity, the text-book and guide being found in the Word.

The great heart and soul-life of humanity presses on, it may be in conscious, steadfast obedience to this Word already spoken which sways its life, or it may be carefully, painfully toiling on from day to day: suddenly there comes to each and all the voice of the Mighty Angel, saying, "It is finished," and God casts over its busy ways the veil of the silence of death. And then those days of probation, whatever their aim, are marshaled by the

Angel of God in due order — all the hosts of them.

Through the death-sleep, with its hush of silence, will the voice of that life come forth more plainly than ever before, living still among men in blessing or warning, while the soul passes to its own place in the life beyond. What it has really sought it will there forever find. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; he that is holy, let him be holy still."

We read of "silence in heaven."* A poet's† true insight leads us to see the angels of God pause in their service before the throne of God, pressing earthward around the suffering Saviour as they gaze in wonder and awe at the love of God manifest on the cross.‡ Meanwhile the human life flows on, it would seem, but little moved by that which stirred the height of heaven.

The Silence of Death.

This comes to all, to shield from the pitiless glare of earthly life, and the varied evils time must

* Rev. viii. 1. † Mrs. Browning. ‡ 1 Peter i. 12; Matt. xxvi. 53.

bring. As this Sabbath hush comes of rest sent from God, imagine the awakening to the toil-stricken laborer in the deadening atmosphere of the factory, or the underground workman of the mine — those spirits in the prisons of earth, whose dumb lives pass to the One who preached to such, that they might have life from Him! "They go down into silence;" but is it not that silence of heaven which meets them, leading them to look with the angels, at the crucified Saviour, and find the perfect life He died to give them.

Not only these social serfs, who are kept by the pride of the task-master, as "dwellers in silence" from the Word of Life; or those who seem tied to an endless chain of petty duties, keeping them from the fresh air of heaven, but they who have the world before them; their souls become fettered by the weighty chain of conventional custom or fashion, which "steals the time of God" (as the proverb says), given them to share with the Christ the work of redeeming the heavy-laden. The one thing which must be a real fact to all these is the coming of the Death-Angel — that sure, dark

hunter of the German legend: to this they seek to shut their eyes, as the bird of the desert tries to avoid its pursuer. Yet over their life must come the same silence as it passes hence from fevered unrest to reality! and what reality can they grasp who have never sought to find? In the world of phantoms they have chosen to live, seeking amusement, or whatever might suit their whim; in the shadow-land of Hades their life goes on, forever pursuing, forever eluding, and like Death, their master, cannot be satisfied. But, to the Christian, while to live on earth is Christ or anointing, to die is gain, passing from the strife of earth to that Sabbath or "rest which is glorious," as God giveth His beloved sleep.

But the bustle of the world goes on, and seeks to fill with its stir the silent places death leaves as it takes our loved ones; but let these vacant places be kept sacred, even as the holy of holies, where God will meet with us, and we may hear His Word, with its still small voice, yet mightier than the mighty shock which has jarred our life to its depths.

In the dread silence left in the hearts of those

who listen in vain for the footfall whose coming would be as the light of heaven — in even this may come the wondrous peace that springs from angel-ministry, — nay, from the very presence of the God of all patience and comfort; that peace which stills in the soul the tempest of selfish sorrow, and quickens it to gather up the fragments of life remaining, and bring them to Jesus; and, led by the Spirit to leave merely earthly things behind, press to the prize of the high calling of the life in Christ, which makes manifest the life beyond the grave. As the sleep of death presses in all around us with its silence, let us learn the lesson, and draw near the One who hath the keys of death and Hades, who is Lord of the Sabbath or rest.

"Though with silence only as their benediction God's angels come,
When, in the shadow of some great affliction, the soul sits dumb;"

yet the power of such manifestations leaves a sacred hush in life, which, though it can never be translated into human speech, marks an era in which the soul learns anew to worship.

Silent as the stars are these ministering angels sent by the Christ;* yet the stars lead us in the darkness of night, and bring us the light of heaven: so they who pass from this world to the Eternal Light shall shine as the stars of heaven, and are associated with the angel hosts as messengers of God, ministering to man.†

God, who alone "can bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades" and guide Arcturus,‡ has bound in one bundle or sheaf of life the varied soul-kindred of those in heaven and on earth. Through the Word only do we get sure glimpses of the nearness of this higher life, and the great communion in which all life blends in the Christ of God.

We slowly realize how vast is the temple of life on the threshold of which we stand, and that God rules with present power over its many mansions. The Death-Angel is but the messenger to all, saying, "The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him." As our loved ones leave us, let us learn this silence from earthliness, and behold the opened heavens, where we

* John i. 51; Gen. xxviii. 12. † Heb. i. 14. ‡ Job xxxviii. 31, 32.

see enthroned, as Lord of the holy temple of life, the Saviour, who has said to all, "Come unto Me, and I will *give* you rest." Shall we not pause in the bustle of life long enough to receive, reverently and thankfully, from our Lord this gift filled with the peace of God, which passeth understanding?

Turning in mute appeal to the Lord of all life from that sad boundary-line of earth, the grave, it may become as the Angel of God to the soul, bringing death to self, silence from our earthly unrest; and we may hear the voice from heaven saying, "It is in vain for you to rise up early, and so late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness, for so He giveth His beloved in their sleep."*

Let us look to the Life-Giver, who, in crowning the gift of life with rest, saves to the uttermost — even now in this earthly world. Meanwhile the Death-Angel gathers the harvest of life; a thousand souls leave earth behind each moment of time, yet we are told of a final life-harvest: 'For behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but in a moment we shall be changed, for

* Greek version.

the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised: and this corruptible must put on incorruption, this mortal must put on immortality, and death be swallowed up in victory.' These glowing words would specially thrill the heart of the Jew, and of every one versed in the older record of God's dealing with man — that record which the apostle of the Gentiles loved so well, and pointed out to us as a precious gift from God.

"For thus spake Jehovah: In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a Sabbath* — a memorial of blowing of trumpets." † This day was the new-year holiday of the civil year, and kept in high festival. According to the Jewish rabbis, it commemorated the birthday of the world, or that beginning of creation "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." It was also a tradition among these rabbis that this day in every year God judges all men, making them pass as a flock before the shepherd. Some allusion to this idea is perhaps found in Job i. 6: "Now there was a day

* Sabbath is the Hebrew word for Rest. † Lev. xxiii. 24.

when the sons of God came to present themselves before Jehovah."

The feast of trumpets ushered in a season of wild rejoicing, lasting until that day of atonement which proved the most solemn and unique observance of the entire sacred service. Then came the feast of the tabernacles, when the whole multitude of worshipers were summoned from their tents of boughs, from the mountains round about Jerusalem, to the temple, by the priests sounding the silver trumpets.

These trumpets, in the time of the desert tabernacle, were two in number.* Later, at the consecration of the temple, we read of a hundred and twenty priests† sounding with trumpets as part of the solemn music of the sacred service; while, still later, it is said a thousand priests sounded their trumpets on the white walls of the temple to gather the people for their sacred feast of the tabernacle, when they brought the first fruits of their wine and oil. Thus the whole seventh month became, as it was called, the Sabbath month of the

* Numb. x. 2. † 2 Chron. v. 12.

year, and otherwise marked as the time they began to plow and sow; while the last fruits of the harvest from the olive trees were ingathered.

The Jubilee Trumpet.

Still more remarkable than any of these associations was the Sabbath or rest of the seventh year, which began with the feast of trumpets of that year, and derives its name from the sound of that instrument. The laws concerning this year of rest, the freedom and redemption from poverty and care, and the miracles by which it was sustained, are familiar to all. This year of rest was so marked a feature in Jewish history that Alexander the Great remitted all taxes for that year, after his conquest of the country.

When seven of these Sabbath years had been kept, and after seven times seven years had passed, came the jubilee year, or great festival, in which perfect redemption was re-established in the land, and the fiftieth year was added as an additional Sabbath of rest; but this also was solemnly inaugurated on the day of atonement, and the sound

of the trumpet was heard not only in the temple and city of Jerusalem, but throughout the land.*

All these laws were a constant defence to the oppressed and unfortunate, and served as a constant check on the aggression of the rich; besides which the special miracle of the sustenance of the people † was a token of the presence of God with His people, fulfilling the promise of the Covenant Angel, who "dealt wondrously." ‡ "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest." §

The historic associations with the trumpet sound are of interest, as well as those connected with the sacred service. Far back as the time of the Judges, we read of the Jewish leader, who, with his three hundred men, with their trumpets and lamps, destroyed the power of the Prince of Midian, whose "hosts were as the sand of the sea." ‖

Previous to this was that strange siege of Jericho. On the seventh day the seven priests, with seven trumpets, go seven times around the walls of the doomed city. The ark of God was carried

* Lev. xxv. 8–17. † Ex. xxiii. 1. ‡ Judges xiii. 19.
§ Ex. xxxiii. 14. ‖ Judges vii. 12, 18.

with them, and the men of war followed; and then giving the jubilee note,* each man went up straight before him, over the prostrate walls, which had fallen at that sound. Thus they gained possession of the promised land in a way well suited to make them lean on the arm of Jehovah, rather than their own strength.

Earlier than this was the long sound of the trumpet heard on Mount Sinai as the herald of the Word of God, and all the people bowed in worship.† In sacred history this trumpet-tone speaks of victory and solemn worship, as well as freedom and perfect rest. We trace it back to the hour when the Word was miraculously given to man; when God was heard speaking with human voice.‡

* The words translated trumpets of ram's horns seem to refer to the jubilee trumpet; either the special form then used, or the long sound, which was the note peculiar to that time.

† "When the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount; . . . and . . . Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; . . . and when the voice of the trumpet sounded long and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice." (Ex. xix. 13–18, 19.) This long or great sound of the trumpet was echoed in Sabbath years of rest and redemption. It is referred to in Isaiah xxvii. 13.

‡ Ex. xix. 19, 21.

To the world at large the trumpet has been the herald of royal power, whether in command of life and death, or the personal coming of the king. Again, in the battle-field, armies were marshaled by its voice rising vividly above the confusion. Above the world's life rises the "trump of God" — even the voice of the Word, which leads, with its "certain sound," the church militant from Sinai to the gates of heaven.

Without this definite Holy Word we should falter in the "fight of faith," neither knowing the might of the powers, which war against the soul, — thus sinking into nerveless inaction; — nor the strength that is with the children of faith, who listen for the Voice to lead. "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" therefore the definite Word is given as our most sacred gift on earth from God; while those who with certain tone so echo the Word that others give it due heed, — are as angels of God to the souls of men.

With the Jew, for many years, the trumpet was the herald of the direct command or provi-

dence of God in their daily life, that they might be saved from their enemies.* It was an "ordinance forever" that it should call the people to their solemn assemblies, and was heard in their sacred feasts.† The trumpet summoned to the temple an entire nation, as the church bell now summons all Christendom to praise and prayer. The Christian may well feel, with the Jew, the gladness and sacredness of these associations.

For the trumpet tone of Sinai shall again sound, long and louder, as it summons, not one nation only, but the whole world to worship, saying, "Behold your King." Of this the Saviour speaks, concerning "the tribes of earth," They shall see the Son of man coming with power and great glory, and He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather His elect, who are (we thus learn) they who listen to the voice of the Word.‡

The apostle tells us that "the Lord Himself

* Numb. x. 1–8, 9.

† Is. i. 13; Ps. lxxxi. 3; 1 Chron. xiii. 8, xvi. 6; 2 Chron. vii. 6, xxix. 27, 28.

‡ Matt. xxv. 31; Rev. i. 10, 12, 13.

shall descend from heaven, with the voice of an archangel, and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first."* As we listen to this word, our hearts even now thrill as with the sound of the "trump of God," nerving us to the battle of life. The herald trumpet will sound louder and longer, as time goes on, until these little years of man cease in the endless redemption of the eternal years, with the untold freedom that awaits the child of God, when, the time of our warfare being ended, we share His rest, which is glorious.

"*The Number Seven.*"

Three and seven are the numbers of mystery and power in the intellectual traditions of man. In the East specially, curious research has been made into the properties of numbers, in connection with their studies of the stars. Whatever of truth or error may mingle in all these efforts to find the "soul of numbers," we are constantly reminded of the number seven in the Inspired Record, whether we look at the sevenfold law of

* 1 Thess. iv. 16, 18.

development laid down in the seven æons of creation, or at the seven phases of life and its history, guided by their several angels, of which we have some idea given us in the Apocalypse of St. John.* The life of the church of God is there presented in sevenfold form, both in time of duration and development. So that, in these seemingly least things, a subtle law or principle is manifest, and the law of soul-life has its analogy in the more palpable matters of this material world, which is adorned with the glory and beauty of sevenfold coloring.

The Word, in the history of the past, as well as in the outline of the future, frequently recurs to this number, which it finally associates with the work of the Spirit or Teacher of Truth, of which the sevenfold flame of the sacred light or candlestick is a God-given type. The intellectual world has vaguely grasped at something of this truth, as it divides man's life in its seven ages. Tradition, specially of the Jew, assigns seven thousand years as the term of duration of the present forms of life on earth, and the final or seventh thousand, which,

* Rev. viii. 12; xvi. 1.

according to Hebrew chronology, is near at hand, will be the great jubilee or rest, or the Sabbath of centuries, to which those of days and years were but the prophecy; this also would be inaugurated with the sound of trumpets on the final celebration of the sacred day of atonement. Akin to this idea of the ancient scholars is that of the millennial reign of Christ on earth, which is held by many Christians.

The Egyptians and Hindu races divided their time into weeks of seven days, founded on the supposed number of the planets. This number receives the strongest association we have with it, from the fact that Jehovah, when His people are led forth from bondage, makes this division of time perpetual, as from Sinai goes forth the law of the seventh, or Sabbath of rest, to break from which was death.

The Seventh Day, or Sabbath of Rest.

If we would gain some idea of the power of redemption and freedom the Word would bring into our daily life, let us look at this gift of God

as it came to the Hebrews, condemned by perpetual toil to speedy death, or a life so wretched that death was the longed-for and only emancipation. Unheeded as the leaves fall in the forest they died at their endless tasks.

Redeemed by the might of Jehovah, they pause in the wilderness to hear the life-word. As the memorial of their freedom, and seal and sign of the Redeemer's presence, comes this gift of the seventh of time as a rest, in which the souls of God's children might commune with their Redeemer and Guide. With this gift comes the token of the Most Merciful, whose care is over all His works; as the rest of the house-servant, slave, and beast of burden is enjoined as part of that sacred service of obedience to the Word, which from Sinai until now is the covenant sign of friendship with God. For years the sacredness of this law of rest was impressed on the dull hearts and minds of His people by the double portion of manna.

In a merely physical point of view, this law of the seventh has been proved a law of life, — its observance is essential to positive health and

vigor.* But from the first we see that more than mere physical vigor or refreshment was included in the blessing intended by Him who gave this gift. Even the rest wherewith God Himself will cause the weary to rest, and refresh the soul of those ready to perish, is promised here to all the "weary and heavy-laden," who in heart and truth seek the rest so often promised far back in the wilderness life, and now again to us if we will come to Christ, and follow Him.

This rest of the soul, or communion with God, is found in these words of our Saviour: "If a man love Me, and keep My sayings, My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." As a means of attaining to this friendship with the God of Revelation comes this gift of the Sabbath, which we are told shall be a delight, and honorable or honored, among all the children of faith. To mar the beauty of this

* This has been thoroughly and even profanely tested, as, in the French Revolution, they substituted the law of the tenth, or that of their own will and works, for obedience to the will and way of God; while, at the same time, they gave homage to the god of reason, rather than the Jehovah of revelation.

gift, science and bigotry have done their worst; it is not given us that we might seek transient rest from our own amusements, but that we might find abiding joy and rest in the presence of our Redeemer, and the loving thoughts of our heavenly Father. The observance of this seventh of time, as sacred to communion with God and learning to grasp the facts and promises of His glorious revelation, was enforced by some of the most definite of the promises of temporal blessing in the whole Word. But how many toil on, like the Egyptian serf, without this rest that abideth for the people of God, their lives filled with self-imposed tasks!

All this reminds us that the power and fullness of these thoughts of God, concerning our salvation or redemption, — that is, our safety and healing, — cannot possibly be apprehended without patient and reverent attention. Even in the beauty and glory of the art world, they who would learn its truth must be patient and diligent before they can understand the work of the masters, much less attempt any of their own; therefore, when God speaks to His children, and brings gifts to man, we

should take them reverently, and listen humbly, that we may the more quickly come home to the fullness of meaning, and the love thus shown.

Obviously, man must always be a learner, and God, his Maker, must best know the way home to Himself. He has given the Text-Book of Life, His Word; while, to those who receive it, the interpreter is promised — even the Spirit of Truth, who, since our Saviour's ascension, is as manifest in the life of the Church of God, and the hearts of believers, as the Covenant Angel was in leading the Church through the wilderness.

The Word forms holy ground where God and man may meet; and where this is kept sacred, as of old, the glory of the Presence will shield and enlighten the soul. While time lasts the law of the seventh, or Sabbath of rest, must be a law of life as needful to the development of the strongest as to the weakest.

The Seventh Æon.

The first few verses of God's Book* give the outline of the endless ages of creation; the whole

* Forming chapter first, which should end with Gen. ii. 3.

of the remainder hardly takes us to the close of the seventh æon; it sketches the life of man on earth, and as the twilight of time ceases in eternity, the full power of its light is lost in the clear shining of the glory of God.* The older record of the Word does not take us through evening or night; while the later Record, or New Testament, begins with the coming of the Morning Star. The light which that dawn has prophesied has not yet fully prevailed on earth.

In the beginning of this seventh day, the key † to all its life is given; its aim and end being rest in the presence of God.

Paradise.

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the garden of God." (Rev. ii. 7.)

The first step in the world of the seventh æon leads to the Garden of Eden, the paradise of God, where we see in full harmony the creations of life on earth. As in our own time, at certain seasons, the light seems to glow far into the night, so the

* Rev. x. 1–6; xxi. 23. † Gen. ii. 1–3.

evening of this seventh day seems full of light, neither of sun or moon, glowing far into the night of time, "with glimpses of glory ne'er forgot," which have served as the prophecy of an eternal light, the coming of which would fill the earth with its fullness.

Jehovah.

As the Creator breathes the living soul into the dust of the ground, and man is formed, we find the Deity made known to us by this name Jehovah, which is translated, here and elsewhere, Lord. From the beginning, in God's direct dealing with man, we find this special name indicating the Holy One by whom the Godhead is made manifest.*

From the very first we are led, not to an unknown God, who may be vaguely worshiped; but He draws near, and is seen not only in paradise, but in the wilderness time, as the Covenant Angel Jehovah, leading His people. We find Him manifest where the Bethel, or house of God, is first founded. When the ladder, or way to heaven, is

* John i. 18; Acts ii. 36; Mark i. 24; Is. xli. 4, 14, 16, 20; xliii. 15; xlvii. 4; xlviii. 17, 18.

shown the weary wanderer, behold, Jehovah stood above it,* and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham; I am with thee, and will keep thee, in all places whither thou goest;† and Jacob vowed, saying, If God will be with me, so that I come to my Father's house in peace, then shall Jehovah be my God.

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or the One who appeared to them, makes known the memorial name by which He is loved, and worshiped by the tribes in the wilderness;‡ in the land of rest,§ and through the long ages, the "Jehovah" God of Israel is made known to us as "the Wonderful, the Counselor, the Mighty God," wielding for our welfare the power of the Godhead.

"But no man hath seen God at any time; the Only-begotten, which is in the bosom of the Father, hath declared Him." So that, in all these manifestations, we learn to recognize the One who, ascended in the heavens, is seated at the right hand of God, or, in other words, is the right hand

* Gen. xxviii. 13, 15; John i. 51.
† Matt. xxviii. 19.
‡ Ex. vi. 3.
§ Josh. vi. 16; xxiii. 1.

or executive of the throne of power — even the Saviour of man, whom each disciple now, as of old, slowly learns to recognize as "my Lord and my God."

Hence the Jehovah of power in the Old Testament is the Lord of power and love in the New — the unchangeable Christ, who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever;" who is the head of all things, by whom all things were made, and who, from the first hour of man's life on earth, seeks to lead him into the fullness of blessing through His manifest presence.

The River.

The glad life of Eden was bounded and sustained by the river, which was "parted into four heads;" and this, among the early Christians, was a favorite type of that pure river of life, the Word, which sustained the Church on earth, and which is divided into four great streams as we receive it through the four evangelists; each one being, in its details, associated with some special thoughts and facts, whose preciousness is as great and as distinct as the gold and gems of Havilah.*

* Gen. ii. 11, 12.

To enjoy the fullness of the land, and the blessing of the paradise of God, one thing only was required, and that seemed simple enough: it was to obey the Word, which came directly from the Creator and Giver of all good gifts.

"*Every Living Creature.*" *

Man is placed as king over the tribes of life; the varied creatures are brought before him, and he names them. We have here not only a token of the sacredness of the charge from God, in being the regent of His mercy and power, but we have a glimpse of a far wider communion of life and joy than now exists, as the creature-life readily responds to the voice of its monarch, not having learned the long and bitter lesson of the "fear and dread" of man, which is now the ruling instinct; for man had not then wandered from the loving thought and word of God.

A Help-meet, or Kindred.

A help-meet is now given Adam, to form one life with him, in which we see the truth that

* Gen. ii. 19.

meets us everywhere, of one-ness, being not mere numerical oneness, but the unity of nature or being, made up, it may be, of many in one. One stands only as the key to the nature of the manifold life or power it suggests to the mind. Many in one is the highest expression of harmonized power in the latest advances of civilization, whether in the political world of government, or of practical working power; while a mere unit forever remains a cold, lifeless abstraction.

Our Saviour, as He walked on earth, looking back to this hour when the ties of soul-kindred were solemnly appointed by the Creator, refers to it not only as a literal fact, but one well worthy our care and attention. The fact constantly comes before us, in which one soul stands forth as pledged in allegiance to another before God and man, to trust, or have implicit faith, in its word, even unto death, and, through this faith, to become one with its life. On such kindred God sets the seal of sacredness, as He makes it a type of our soul's allegiance and trust in His life-word.

According to the degree of faith, and the alle-

giance and communion springing from it, so is the degree of kinship arising from it, and so with our life of faith in God. But the Word is given, and its promises pledged to us, that we may cling to it with the unquestioning courage of manhood, and rise to its grandest possibilities with the unfaltering devotion of womanhood. Let us draw so near that the light of the Word and the Spirit may rest upon and shine through the daily life, investing it with the halo of Eden's gladness, so that others may see and rejoice in the presence of God.

*Now the Serpent was more subtle than any Beast of the Field.**

Early in the record of both Old and New Testaments, we find the son of man engaged in the strife of faith. At the very outset God causes us to know the power and venom of the adversary — this prince of the powers of the air, who is chief actor in the tragedies of life. We may almost envy the obtuseness of heart or mind which can look so superficially over the ills of life, and not know that a supernatural power of evil works

* Gen. iii. 1.

there; but, at the same time, we cannot but realize the mercy which has plainly told us of the foe; so that, knowing his subtlety, we come the more earnestly to the Saviour, who will lead His helpless flock to the fold of God.

Centuries of wisdom and experience are the tempter's as he comes to the attack; yet all this wisdom teaches him that nothing can injure the soul of man more than that which weakens his hold on the Word. Therefore the finished logic of ages of thought is brought to belittle or do away with its power. As time passes the same thing occurs again and again; while Christ our example shows us that through holding fast to the "Sword of the Spirit," which is the Word of God, the great antagonist is overcome effectually, and angels of heaven minister to the soul. Our Saviour tells us that, even among believers, the one who breaks — that is, seeks to break — away from the least of these words, and teaches men so, — the same shall be least in the kingdom of heaven. Meanwhile, the serpent still reasons upon probabilities and possibilities; but faith claims the prom-

ise with practical power, and takes the Word into its daily life, testing it there. The subtle earth-born reasoner fascinates and charms, while it feeds the soul with hopes which turn to dust and ashes.

*They heard the Voice of the Lord God, and they hid themselves from the Presence.**

So the fall from paradise is failing in allegiance to the Word of God; while to receive that Word, or hear that Voice, is to commune with the Presence. But they hid themselves among the trees of the Lord's planting; so we often use the choicest gifts of God to shut out and set aside the eternal light, until "our cedars must fall around us ere we will behold the sun;" while with the plea of unfitness, or would-be humility, we follow out our own will or way, instead of the one service, with its true humility, which God asks of us, which is to receive and follow the Word. The Voice still comes to us in every perplexity; in every event of life may be heard the Good Shepherd, calling, "Where art thou?"

* Gen. iii. 8.

Sorrow comes with its shadow, pain with its purifying touch, and toil with its penalties, and splendid possibilities: with all of these God tries the hearts of the wilderness wanderers,* as to whether they will keep the Word.

The tree of knowledge and the tree of life still bloom and bear fruit. The Word and the Spirit, whose power and ministry they typify, are made manifest to all who will seek, and the wonderful fruits of the Spirit are offered to all who keep fast allegiance. "Hold fast till I come;" "for to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." †

"So He drove out the man, and He placed at the east of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life." ‡ From that hour the heart of man has turned toward the East, where, in fullness of time, when wearied monarchs paused in their warfare, the Prince of Peace is born in the manger at Bethlehem; and thus the "Desire of all nations," the One in whom all na-

* Deut. viii. 2. † Rev. ii. 7-25. ‡ Gen. iii. 24.

tions should be blessed, visits the earth from on high.

As man leaves Eden, with its happy innocence, the angel guardians of man are first made known; showing that, even in judgment or penalty, God's thought toward us is filled with mercy. These cherubim, or bearers of the Word, are again seen in the holy of holies, where the Word was kept sacred. They are distinguished as they who love the best; therefore they minister to man that which will most help him. In fullness of time man becomes associated with these angel hosts in this same ministry, as we learn from the apostles. We find from this that one of the truest tests of real love to God and suffering humanity is allegiance to the Word, becoming living epistles of its power, and keeping it sacred and pure for those who come after us in the drifting life of this world.

We see the cherubim associated, from the beginning, with the flaming sword, — that sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, — and we are taught that thus the way of life is kept or

guarded for the penitent and for whosoever will turn to its light. The flame resting upon this sword of Faith is the light of the Spirit, by which we may read its story aright; it is a glare of mystery or dread to those who choose to walk without, but it becomes a pathway illumined with love to those, who, turning to follow the Voice which calls, steadily set their faces heavenward.

The way of life is Christ; He it is who calls us, that we may come and receive freely, through His gift, of the fruits of the Spirit, or Tree of Life; for such is the promise of our ascended Saviour. The flaming sword turned every way; so does the Word search everywhere, with its light of life, while all creatures are manifest before that insight and power, which, reaching even unto the ends of the world, can effectually enlighten, quicken, and shelter all who seek this aid; "therefore let us come boldly to the throne, that we may obtain mercy and find help in time of need."*

From the gates of Eden until now, we are

* Heb. iv. 11-16.

taught of the twofold ministry of the Word and the Spirit, or Teacher of Truth, seeking to enter our daily life and abide there, to heal, help, and comfort effectually whatever may threaten; and if we give our hearts' allegiance, God Himself will be found present with us,

MIGHTY TO SAVE.

BS
651

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: May 2005

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